

THE FIFTH

6

Catholick Letter

IN

R E P L Y

TO

Dr. *Stillingfleet's* (Pretended) A N S W E R

To

About the *Fortieth Part* of *J. S's*

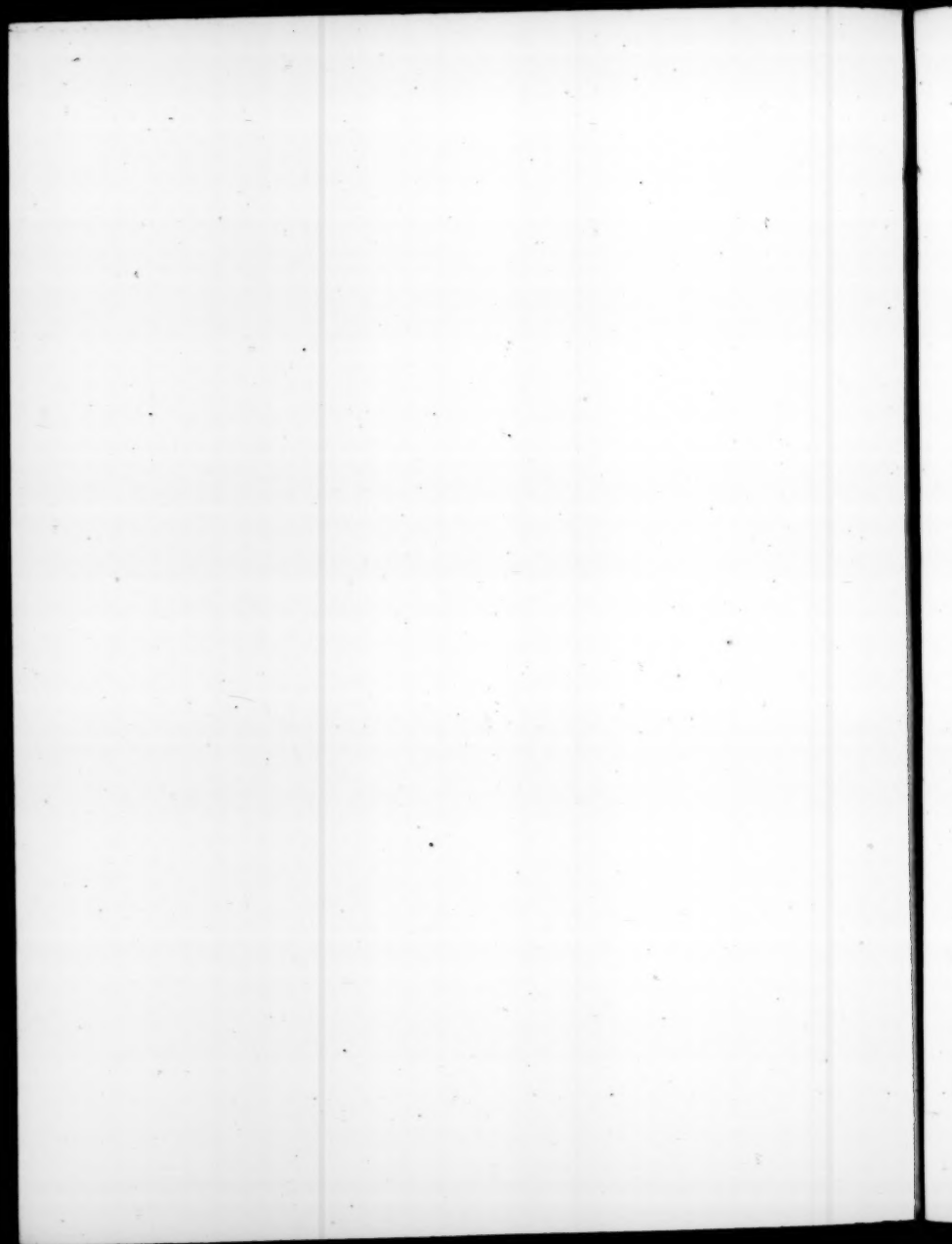
Catholick Letters,

Address'd to all Impartial Readers.

By *John Sergeant.*

Published with Allowance.

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at the *Lamb* in *High-Holborn*, 1688.



THE
PREFACE.

Address to the most Partial of
Dr. Stillingfleet's Friends.

Gentlemen,

WHen a Person is incomparably qualify'd above all others in any Particular; men use to look upon him as a Pattern in that Kind. I will not say Dr. St. has manifested himself to be such an Exemplar in every respect that can be an Ingredient of an Ill Controvertist. This is yet to be shewn; and Pretence without Proof signifies nothing: Only I may justly fear that, while you are reading my Reply to his Answer (as he calls it) to my Catholick Letters, you may be apt to judge that I am rather framing an Idea of what Human Weakness maintaining an insupportably-ill Cause may be obnoxious to, than giving a Just Character of his Performances; and that, 'tis Absolutely Impossible that a Man of his Parts should be Guilty of such and so many incredible Failings. I acknowledge with all due Respect to him, his Great Endowments; and am heartily glad, in Truth's behalf, I am engag'd with an Adversary to whom no Personal Insufficiency can be objected. Nothing could make the Victory come, more Clear to the Cause I am defending; and the more Dr. St. is rais'd above the Common Levell of Writers, the more Evidently it will appear that nothing but the pure force of Truth could drive a man of his Abilities to such unparallel'd Shifts and Subterfages, to palliate that Error the Patro-

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nage of which he had so unfortunately espous'd. Nor is it to be wonder'd at, that even the best Wit in the World should be baffled while it maintains such a Cause: For, were it some Errour of an ordinary size that he defended, or were the Truth which he opposes of a trivial Importance, Rhetorick and misus'd Wit might perhaps bear it down, and gain a seeming Victory over it: but when the sole Point is, whether even what we all hold to have been the Faith taught by Christ, may for ought any man living knows, be perhaps none of his; and so, a Fallhood and a Lying Story; 'tis not to be imagin'd that any Tricks of Human Skill can prevail against a Point of that Sacred Concern. It belongs to the Wisdom of our Good God, to settle those things most firmly, which are of the greatest Weight; and therefore the Certainty we are to have that Christ was indeed the Author of the Faith we profess, being such an Incomparable Good, and the Basis of all our Spiritual Building, must be by far more unremovably establish'd, and more surely plac'd above a tottering Contingency, than the strongest Pillars of this Material World; whence, all Attempts to undermine, and weaken this Certainty (which as shall be seen is the Chief Endeavour of Dr St.) must be proportionably Weak and Ruinous.

To give you a Map of his main Performances taken from his Book in short, and prov'd upon him in this Reply.

First, Whereas 'tis the Principal Duty of a Controvertist (especially, writing about the Grounds of Faith) to justify, that is to prove Faith to be True; the Dr is so far from doing, or allowing this good Office to be done to Faith, that he maintains the direct contrary. Nay, he will not grant so much honour to any Particular Point of Faith (and our Whole Faith is made up of such Particulars) as to let it enjoy even his own kind of Absolute Certainty, tho' that falls short of proving any thing to be above possibility of Fallhood or (which is the same) True; but says over and over in perfectly equivalent terms that the Sense which himself, or any man (or Church either) has of Scripture in particular Points, may not be the True Sense of it; that is, may not be Christ's Doctrin; which if it be not, it may not be True; And is it possible that what may not be True, can at the same time be True; that is, Is it possible that Truth may not be its self.

Secondly, We are writing Controversy, and consequently treating of Faith precisely according to a particular consideration belonging to it;

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It, which is, by what way 'tis with Absolute Certainty derivable from Christ. This has been repeated and Eccho'd to him over and over even to Surfeit. This was the Scope and Occasion of the Conference. This is express in my Short Discourse against his way of having Certainty of Christ's Doctrin; and clearly aim'd at in Mr G's Demonstration. Nay, this has been told him fifteen years ago in Error Non-plust, p. 44. Where I in these plainest words thus Stated the Question. "[It being then agreed amongst us all that what Christ and his Apostles taught is God's Word, or his Will, and the Means to Salvation; all that is to be done by us as to matters of Faith, is to know with Absolute Certainty what was the first-taught Doctrin, or Christ's Sense; and whatever can thus assure us of That, is deservedly call'd, The Rule of Faith.] Yet, tho' we should trumpet this into his Ears every moment, he is still Deaf, and never takes notice of it, or regards it in his whole Reply; Nay, he diverts from it with all the hast he can make, when our express words force him to it. To do this with the greater Formality and Solemnity, he Entitles his Book, [A Discourse concerning the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith.] Which Expression is so Large, that it leaves it Indifferent for him, under that Head, either to treat of Faith as 'tis in its self, viz. as 'tis Divine; or of Faith as 'tis Controverted between us; that is of our Faith as 'tis Ascertainable to us to be Christ's true Doctrin. And, that we may see this was done by Design, when he comes to determine the Sense of those Equivocal Words, he pitches upon that Meaning of them which is quite beside our purpose, and nothing at all to our Question: viz. upon Christ's Faith as 'tis Divine; which is not disputed but agreed to be such; and this, whether the Faith comes to our knowledge by Tradition attesting it; or by an Absolutely Certain Interpretation of Scripture; and the sole Question is, whether the Tradition of the Church or the Letter of Scripture interpreted by any Way his Principles afford us, be the more Certain and more Clear Way to give us Christ's Sense, or (which is the same) our Faith. How untoward a Procedure is it then, to stand quoting our School-Divines against me, whenas the Objects of Controversy and of School-Divinity are so vastly different: the one treating of Faith as made known to the World at first by Divine-Revelation; the other, of the Way to know now what was at first Divinely reveal'd, by Human Motives inducing men to the Acceptation of it of for the same Doctrin.

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Doctrin. Hence, also, when he was to bring *Arguments* which should evince, by his Principles, that the Faith held now is the same that was reveal'd at first, to avoid that impossible task, he falls unseasonably to alledge God's Grace and Invisible Moral Qualifications: Which, tho' absolutely requisit in many regards to Faith as 'tis formally Divine; yet are they most improper to be alledg'd in Controversy against an Adversary, for a Proof that what he holds is the first-taught Doctrine; since only God himself can know whether the Alledger or any man else has those Supernatural Means or no.

To put a stop once for all to this impertinent Topic, and to shew how he trifles while he quotes our School-Divines, I alledge First, that the plain state of the Question lately given, which runs through our whole Controversy, has forestall'd all he can object from them; unless he can shew that they stated the Question, and treated of Faith under the same Consideration, as we do in our Controversy; which I am Certain he cannot instance in so much as any one of them: And in case they do not state it after the same manner we do in our Controversy, with what sense can it be pretended that I contradict Them, or They Me, whenas we do not speak of the same Point, and a Contradiction must be ad idem? Secondly, Our Divines bring *Motives of Credibility* to prove Christian Faith to be Divine and True; such as are Miracles, the Conversion of the World, the Sufferings of the Martyrs, &c. Very good, would Dr St. reply, these might prove the Faith profess'd in those times to be True: but you have alter'd that Faith since, and therefore you are to prove that the Faith you profess now is the same which was of old. So that, out of the very nature of our circumstances, This is the Only Point between us, and the main business of our Controversy about the Rule of Faith, or the Ground that can justify its Invariable Conveyance downwards; for, this being made out by us, all the rest is admitted. Thirdly, Hence both the Protestants and We agree, that That is to be called the Rule of Faith * by which the knowledge of Christ's Doctrine is convey'd certainly down to us at the distance of so many Ages from the time of its first Delivery. Does any of our School-Divines take the Words [Rule of Faith] in this Sense? Not one. They content themselves with what serves for their purpose, and call that a Rule of Faith which barely contains Faith. Fourthly, Our only Point being to know assuredly the former Faith by a Certain Conveyer, how must

* Dr Tillotson's Rule of Faith. p. 67.

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must this be made out to those who are enquiring what is Christ's True Doctrin? Must we bid them rely on their Private Interpretations of Scripture? No surely; for this is the way Proper to all Hereticks. Must we bring them the Publick Interpretation of it by the Church? This might do the deed so we could manifest this by some Knowledges those Candidates are already possess'd of, and did admit. Must we then, at the first dash, alledge the Publick Interpretation of the Church Divinely assisted? What effect can this have upon those who do not yet hold that Tenet; and, consequently, how can this be a Proper Argument to convince them? It remains then that we can only begin with their unelevated Reason, by alledging the Church's Human-Authority or Tradition (the most vast and best-qualify'd Testimony to convey down a notorious matter of Fact, of Infinite concern, that ever was since the World was Created) for a Certain Conveyer of Faith from the time that those Motives of Credibility, proving the then-Faith to be Divine, were on foot. And, if so, why not with the same labour, and for the same Reasons, to bring it down from the very Beginning of the Church? And if we must alledge it, are we not oblig'd, as Disputants, to bring such Arguments, to prove that Authority Certain, as do conclude that Point? If they do not, what are they good for in a Controversy, or what signifies a Proof that Concludes nothing? This is the Sum of my Procedure and my Reasons for it in short; which are abundantly sufficient to shew to any man of Sense, that, while the Doctor objects our School-Divines to one in my Circumstances, his hand is all the while in the wrong Box, as will more at large be shewn hereafter. He might have seen cited by me in my * Clypeus Septemplex, two Writers of great Eminency, viz. Father Fisher, the most Learned Controvertist of his Age here in England; and a Modern Author, Dominicus de Sancta Trinitate, whose Book was Printed at Rome it self, and approv'd by the Magister Sacri Palatii, who (to omit divers others) do abet each particular Branch of my Doctrin; which renders insignificant all his pretence of my Singularity, and my Opposition to the Catholick Controvertists.

But to leave off this necessary Digression and proceed. As our Doctor has shuffled off the whole Question by taking the word [Faith] as treated of by us, in a wrong Sense, so he behaves himself as ill in every particular of the rest of his Title; viz. in his discoursing of his pretended [Assurance] of Faith, and of the [Nature] and the [Grounds] of it. He cannot

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cannot be won to give us any Account how his Grounds Influence the Points of Faith with the Absolute Certainty he pretended. And as for the Certainty it self, (the only word of his Title that is left) he never shews how any one Article (even though it be most Fundamentall) is absolutely secur'd from being False or Heretical, by any Rule, Ground or Way he assigns us. Nor can I imagin any thing could tempt him to so strange Extravagances, but the streight he was in, being put to shew his Faith Absolutely Certain; and his Despondency ever to perform an Undertaking, which he foresaw was, by his shallow Principles, impossible to be achiev'd. And hence he was necessitated to all these crafty Snifts, and Wiles, and all those Unsound Methods which, like so many complicated Diseases, affect his languishing Discourse and dying Cause; as shall be laid open in the Progress of this Discourse, and, particularly, in the Concluding Section. I shall only instance at present in two or three Material ones, which, like the Grain in wood, run through his whole Work. For Example:

When any Question is propounded which grows too troublesome, he never pursues that Game but flushes up another, and flies at that, 'till the true Point be out of sight. Tell him our Point is whether the High Mysteries and other Spiritual Articles of Faith be Clear in Scripture; he will never answer directly, but runs to Points necessary to Salvation. Ask him if the Tenet of Christ's Godhead be necessary to Salvation; no direct Answer can we get to that neither, tho' it be the very Point we instanc't in. Press him that there are no Unnecessary Points; and, therefore, that All are Necessary for the Generality of the Church, he cries Alas for me! but answers nothing. Ask him what Points he accounts Necessary? He is perfectly mute: 'Till at length he shuffles about so, that the true Question which is about a Rule of Faith, comes to be chang'd into a Rule of Manners; and those High Spiritual Points which are most properly Christian, and could only be known to the World by Divine Revelation, are thrown aside; and Moral ones put in their place, which were known to many even of the Heathen Writers. And this is the best Sense I can pick out of a man who affects to wrap up those Tenets of his, and their Consequences, which he thinks would not be for his Credit to discover, in Mysterious Reserves. The like Shuffling he uses in the Notion of Certainty, or any other that is of Concern in our present Dispute; for he is a very Impartial man,

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man, and treats them *All* alike. Ask him then, *If Faith be Absolutely Certain by his Grounds?* He will not say it, but more than once hints the contrary. Are the *Grounds* of it at least *Absolutely Certain*, tho' he makes them such ill-natur'd things that (contrary to all other Grounds in the world) they keep their *Absolute Certainty* to themselves, and will let Faith have none of it? Yes; he'll tell you they are; provided that by *Absolute Certainty* you will mean such a Certainty as will permit those Grounds may be False, and Faith built upon them much more: for we are to know 'tis a *Maxim* with him that the *Absolute Certainty* he allows his Grounds is possible to be False, and he allows a less degree of Certainty to Particular Points than to his Grounds, so that Faith may much more easily be False than his Grounds may, though they may be False too. And all this out of an *Antipathy* I suppose, to *Infallibility*, because the abominable Papists own it; as if Mankind did not use to say they are *Infallibly Certain* of some things before the Papists were born. What then is this *Absolute Certainty*? Is it merely built on his Apprehension or Thinking it so? No, but upon such an Evidence as the Thing is capable of. *Very good*. Is any thing in the world capable to be known? 'Tis a strange Paradox to deny it; and yet if he grants it he cannot escape meeting with this bug-bear *Infallibility*: For, if the Knowledge (as it is) be as the Thing is, and the Thing be *Infallibly* as it self is, the Knowledge is *Infallibly* as the Thing is. Here Gentlemen you may expect he will turn it off with some scornfull Irony, for he never in his life answer'd any such pressing Reason any other way. But the Argument will not be laugh'd out of Countenance; and therefore if *Infallibility* must be allow'd, he is to shew us what harm would come to Faith if the Previous Grounds of it, as to our Knowledge, were thus Certain? None at all. But then, alas! his Credit and his Cause will go to wrack; for no shew or shadow of any such Argument can his superficial Principles allow us: and therefore no *Absolute Certainty* will he yield to the Grounds to know Christ's Faith, but such a one as permits all Mankind may be deceiv'd in them, and much more in knowing what is his Doctrine self after we have those Grounds: For *Absolute Certainty* shall not mean *Infallibility*, let us say and prove what we will. However I'll venture to ask him once more; Since (as he says) the Thing, notwithstanding the *Absolute Certainty* we have of its being True, may yet be False, let us suppose (as 'tis not impossible, there being some degree of Contingency in it) that it happens to be False; Can he in that Case have *Absolute Certainty* that a Falshood is True?

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Here it goes hard with him, nor can all his old Heathen Philosophers, be so oft recurr'd to, in the least help him out. He has but one Refuge that I know of to fly to; and that is to use some trick to shuffle away from Absolute Certainty, and say that he meant by it Sufficient Certainty, and That he'll stick to when all his new notions fail him. For Absolute Certainty he was unluckily forc'd upon by Mr G. tho' he had no acquaintance with it, or friendship for it; but his Inclination and Heart was for Sufficient Certainty. And good reason, for in the Sanctuary of that Common Word he's as safe as in an Enchanted Castle. Those scurvy Particularizing Expressions are Tell-tales, and by their Lavishness are apt to discover Sense or Nonsense; but This keeps aloof, and by signifying nothing at all determinately, is past the reach of any Confute. But if you tell him 'tis a Relative word, and put him upon proving that his possibly-false Certainty is Sufficient to conclude it to be True, that any Point of his Faith is the same that our Divine Master taught the World, he'll no more hear or mind you than he did me when I alledg'd that a Rule and Ground were Relative words too; and, therefore, must communicate their Certainty to all the Particular Points they relate to. And, if you continue to press him hard with such Cramp-questions, he'll tell you he's not at leisure, having his foot in the stirrup to take a long Journey as far as Trent: So being Bankrupt of Reason, he withdraws his Effects thence to Trade more fortunately (as he hopes) in Citations; and finding himself beaten at Tradition he gets Letters of Reprizall from his new Logick to revenge himself on us in combating the Tridentin Council; To which he will receive an Answer when he first shews us that he stood firm in his own Principles at home, ere he took such a leap beyond Sea; and Satisfies the World how it is possible that a man who confesses he has no Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith, can be sufficiently qualify'd either to prove any Tenet of his own, or disprove any Tenet of others to be truly Christian.

In a word, his chief Art is to Cloak his Arts, and he is a great Master at it. His Aim is to make his Discourses run plausibly, whatever it costs his Credit: which he hopes is so great now with the Inferiour Clergy, that, let him be as Prodigall of it as he will, it can never be exhausted. The telling of his tale smoothly will take much with those Readers who dwell in the middle story: But strip his Discourse of all those needfull Ornaments and Assistance, and 'tis plain impertinent Nonsense in cuerpo. For, not any thing like a solid Ground is found in his

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his whole Book: *The Manufacture and Contrivance of it is all in all.*

It may perhaps be thought by some that I am too downright with him in divers of my Expressions; but I desire them to consider that I do not use him half so rudely as some of the Church of England have done; and besides, that in doing that little I did, I do but write after his own Copy; and fall very short too of imitating him, as appears by his Angry Viper, venomous froth, Gall, Spleen, Folly, Malice, &c. His Faults are Great, and Many; and must I not Name them when I am oblig'd to lay them open? If I must, the very Names we give to Great Faults will be Harsh words, let me do what I can. Yet I have moderated them as much as the sense of what I ow'd to Christian Faith would give me leave. Besides as my Genius leads me to carry it friendly with unpretended Honesty tho' Erring; so it inclines me to show less respect to a man, who as I see plainly by a constant Experience, has none at all for Truth, but practices and pursues all over Study'd Insincerity.

I have one Request, or rather a fair Offer to make the Dr. which is, that, since it is so mortifying to a man who, (as appears by all his former Writings) aims to reduce Truth to Evidence and Principles, to be still task'd in laying open such multitudes of his Shifts and Prevarications. (For I do think in my Conscience I have not either in this Preface, or my following Booke even hinted a quarter of them) he would condescend that we may each of us chuse two worthy Gentlemen; who, leaving out the Question of Right, may examin only matter of Fact, viz. which of us uses Indirect Tricks and Stratagems to avoid the force of Truth, and which of us candidly pursues it; and let them after a mutual protestation upon their Honours that they will pass an Impartial Verdict, give under their Hands the particulars in which each of us have notoriously fail'd or falter'd: I mean that such Faults, whether of Commission or Omission, should be noted as may appear to be wilfully disingenuous or affectually Insincere, and not merely Humane Oversight. This fair and Equal Offer, Gentlemen, will exceedingly conduce to your and all our Readers Satisfaction; and Dr St's accepting it is the only way to do right to his Credit, which stands impeach'd of using such unworthy Methods: And your pressing him to it, will be both a Justification of your Friendship and Esteem for him, and be also received as a very great favour by

Your Friend and Servant in Christ,

J. S.

ERRATA.

PAge 8. r. unconfonantly. P. 23. l. 15. nor did, p. 28. l. 2. of the Approvers.
p. 35. l. 34. can be competent. p. 64. l. 23. thence embrace. p. 68. l. 21.
Cerinthians. p. 70. l. 27. disparate. p. 101. l. 33. may as much. p. 102.
l. 1. them not to. p. 106. l. 29. 30. is got. p. 108. l. 1. not at all. p. 112. l. 1.
fo plain and eafy. p. 115. l. 13. recurr to. Ibid l. ult. Cenfures. p. 127. l. 33.
any Decrec. p. 128. l. 13. 14. may feem. p. 140. l. 2. following it, then. p.
150. l. 18. Argument good. p. 152. l. 23. ftand yet in. p. 156. l. 19. fhewing
it. p. 166. l. 7. of my words. p. 169. (in the Margent) See above. p. 126.

Introduction.

1. **I**N his Preamble Dr. *St.* according to his usual way of confuting, quarrels every word he meets with, and gives every circumstance an invidious turn. This looks *brisk*; but how *weak* and *flat* he is in his Arguments shall be seen hereafter. In the mean time the dimmest Eye may discern how Impertinent this is to our *Dispute*, and to the *Certainty of his Grounds of Faith*, nay to his own Title-page. I am sorry to see him so much out of humour, as to run against, and strike at every thing near him, tho' it lay not in his way. But *sinking* men, when their case is *desperate*, must catch at *straws* having no firmer support at hand to keep them from *drowning*. *First*, He wonders why Mr. *G.* did not defend his own cause himself. He was at that very time call'd upon to attend his Majesties Service; and it was a Duty owing to Truth and our Sovereign, as well as Charity and Friendship to him, that some body should step in to supply for him. *2ly*, *Why must J. S. be the man?* Because it was desir'd of him; and, he was besides prest to it by many Judicious Persons; as one who had, in their Opinion, and by the Dr's own tacit Confession by his silence for 15 years, unanswerably overthrown his Principles in *Error Non-plust*; and, besides, he was *injur'd*, *provok'd*, and in a manner *Challeng'd* by him in his *Second Letter*, by his quoting and abetting *Heresis Blacloana*, which was writ design-

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edly against *Him*; and by pretending the way of Controversy he follow'd, was *Pelagianism*. Now it belong'd properly to *J. S.* to clear this by his own Pen; and (whatever the Dr's Intention was) I am to thank him he has put a force upon me to Vindicate my self in *English*, which I have done in* two *Latin* Treatises above ten years ago, to the Satisfaction of my Judges and Superiors, and the farther Illustration and Abatement of what I had written in my former Books. 3ly, He quarrels the Titles of my *Catholick Letters*, and that *no one Church of the Christian World ever own'd it*. And does he in his great Learning think the Church is to *Own*, or prescribe every one their particular Methods of handling *Controversy*? All she is to do is to deliver to us *Christ's Doctrine*; and then leave it to the Learning of her *Controvertists* to take such Methods to defend it as best suits with their Circumstances, and the Exigencies of the Persons they are to treat with. Are all the * *Principles* Dr. *St.* laid? Is all his Discourse at the Conference with Mr. *G*? Is his avow'd Position, that every Sober Enquirer may without the Churches help find out all necessary Points of Faith, own'd by any one Catholick Church? I know not what that Great Conventicle of Geneva may do, or what the new one that is now erecting here by the * *Triumvirate* of the Church of England's Reformers, mentioned in the scurrilous Reply to the Bishop of Oxford, may do in time, when they have brought about their Projects; but I am confident he shall never find any one Catholick Church that ever own'd diverse of his Principles and that Position. 4ly, But why did I not call those Letters [*Roman-Catholick*] but [*Catholick*.] He tells the Reader with much assuredness I durst not do so, because I had not forgotten how hardly I had lately escaped Censure at Rome. Now, another man whose Reason was free and undisturb'd, would think I should rather

* *Clypeus*
Septemplex
& *Vindicia*.

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* See Error
Non-pluff.

* Dr. Burnet,
Dr. Tillotson.
and Dr. Stil-
lingfleet.

rather have done this, in *Gratitude* to their allowing and accepting my Defence upon such honourable terms as a kind *Admonition*, that *mindfull of the Apostles words*, [*I am a Debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the Wise and to the Unwise,*] I would explain myself as to some passages, which were * *somewhat obscure* from the * *ambiguity of a word*. My true reason, if he will needs have it, was, because Dr. S's *private-spirited Rule* was Common to all *Hereticks*; and the Rule I defended was quite opposite to it, and therefore *Catholic*; and this, even in the sense of many Eminent Protestants, who pretend to Universal Tradition as the Rule, to ascertain their Interpretations of Scripture; to whom the name of [*Roman*] is not so agreeable.

2. The Dr. will still be leaving the road-way of the Question, tho' (which I am sorry to see) he runs himself into the Bryars most wofully. So he tells the Reader I ought to have let him alone, and not have writ against him, because I *have done next to nothing for my self*, and *seem to have forgotten the Answer to my Sure-footing*, meaning Dr. Tillotson's Rule of Faith. Yes, quite forgotten it without doubt! About two Months after that Answer came out, I publish'd my Letter of Thanks. In which I laid open how he had mistaken still the main point in Controversy; how he had willfully perverted my Sense all along, and falsify'd my Words in many places; nay, inserted some of his own, and then impugnd what himself had disingenuously added; I defended my Testimonies, and reply'd to the most concerning passages. Then, observing that his whole Answer proceeded on a False Ground, *viz.* That there was no Rule of Faith but what left it under the Scandalous ignominy of being *perhaps False*, that is, indeed *no Rule at all*; therefore to stubb-up his shallow-rooted work from its Foundations, I writ another Treatise

Rom. 2. 14

* Aliquantulum obscura.
* Ob Equivocationem utriusque Evidentia.

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* Introduction to Faith Vindication.

* Faith Vindicated. P. 167 to the End.

[*Faith Vindicated*] in which I demonstrated from many Heads that * *the Motives as laid in Second Causes by Gods Providence to light Mankind in their way to Faith, or the (Rule of Faith, (and consequently Faith it self, in what it depends on that Rule, that is, as to us,) must be Impos- sible to be false; and * apply'd it home against Dr St. and Dr. Tillotson at the End of that Treatise; and thence shew'd that his Book could have no just claim to any farther Answer, and that the branches must necessarily be held With'r'd and sapless when the Root was once shown to be rotten. Nor content with this, I follow'd on my blow and sent'd a short discourse, entitled The Method to arrive at Satisfaction in Religion; comprizing, in short, the strength of Sure footing; and reduc't each branch of it to Self-Evident Propositions, which force Humane Nature to assent to their Verity. Farther it was not possible to go. Yet all this, my candid Adversaries, who must not acknowledge it for fear of giving under their hands they owe a Debt they can never pay, slubber over with assuring their Readers, I have done next to nothing in my own Defence. It seems that to talk triflingly is with them to do All; and Principles and clearest Evidences, are either Nothing at all, or next to it.*

3. What Reply made Dr. Tillotson? Why, he had a mind to print his Sermons; and, knowing his Auditory were his best inclin'd Friends, in a Preface (forsooth) to them, he gives a slight touch at each of those Treatises. He endeavours to clear himself of Two of his many Insincerities, and (oh wonderfull !) with about a dozen *Jests* quite confutes Three Books. I would not let him rest so, nor enjoy even this empty vapour; but gave a full and distinct Reply to his Preface in Reason against Rascality. I instructed his shallow Logick, utterly unacquainted with the First Principles of our Understanding, with which Nature imbues even the rudest. I prov'd against him evidently

evidently those few of his many faults of which he had labour'd to purge himself. I laid open the Folly and Weakness of his *First Principle*; and accus'd him severely of making both *Christian Faith* and the Tenet of a *Deity* uncertain; and this by vertue of that very *First Principle* of his: And, out of my zeal for such dear concerns, I charg'd home upon him those two shamefull Tenets by many Arguments. Since which time he has not reply'd a word, but has sat very contentedly under that heaviest Scandal full fifteen Years; and now he stands indebted to me for an Answer to all those Treatises. And I have been so civil a *Creditor* as not once to call upon him severely for such considerable *Arrears*, till Dr. St. would needs have me to be his *Debtor*, and so oblig'd me to make up the Accounts between us. Now, to have done all this, is, if a man of Dr. St's Sincerity may be trusted, *to do next to nothing*, and *not to have defended myself*.

4. But since he will have it so, let's see what Dr. St. himself, who objects this, has done to defend *Himself*. He undertook to write *Principles* for his Protestant Religion. I shew'd in * *Error Nonplust* he had not laid *one* for that particular end. I manifested that he was guilty of the most weak piece of Illogical procedure that ever mortal man stumbled upon; by making almost all his *Conclusions* to be *Self-Evident* and beyond needing any *Proof*; and his *Principles* which should *prove* them, and so ought to be clearer than they, *Obscure* or *False*. * I shew'd the *Grounds* of his Discourse to be plain *Contradictions* and some of his pretended Principles to lead directly to * *Phanaticism*. And yet he has quietly endur'd his Doctrine, concerning the *Grounds* of his Faith to be stigmatiz'd for *Erroneous*, and himself declar'd *Nonplust*; nay he has had the phlegm to see himself expos'd in Capital Letters in the Title-Page of that Book for a *Man of No Principles*; and yet has born it with *Invincible* and
Heroical

* From pa.
212. to the
End.

* Error Non-
plust. p. 236.

* Ibid. P.
123. 124.

Heroical Patience full fifteen Years: Which yet I had not so particularly insisted on at this time, had he not so utterly forgot himself, as to charge me to have *done next to nothing* in my own defence, when I had so manifestly baffled and put to silence, (those who have most reason to pardon my glorying) Dr. Tillotson and Himself. He'll pretend I owe him an Answer to an *Appendix* of his: the main of which is answer'd in *Faith Vindicated*, where its Grounds are subverted; and, if any thing, besides the Raillery, remains unspoken to in *Error Nonplust*, when he pays me my *Hundred Pound*, I will reckon with him for his *Brass Shilling*. So much difference in just value *Principles* ought to have above a loose Discourse made up of meer misrepresentations and Drollery. In the mean time, it were not amiss to give the Reader an Instance how he quite misses the business we are about, in that *Appendix*; which, I conceive, is the most solid way of confuting the whole. * [*If Mr. S.* (says he) *would have undertaken to have told us who they were that first peopled America, and from what place they came, by the Tradition of the present Inhabitants; and what famous actions had been done there in former Ages; we might have thought indeed, that sole Tradition had been a very safe way to convey matters of Fact from one Age to another.*] By which we see he both forgets that the *Tradition* we speak of is *Practical*, and waves all the *Obligations* and *Motives* to continue the memory of *Christ's Doctrine*; which are the greatest God himself could impose, or Man's nature is capable of. He should have shewn us that those Inhabitants of *America*, had some Constant and Obligatory Practices and Solemnities, Commemorating their coming from another Nation, or their former Great Actions (of the same kind the Children of *Israel* had of their deliverance out of *Egypt*) and then he might draw thence some show of an Objection.

* App. to the
Rule of Faith.
p. 82.

jection. And yet, even then, it would fall short of a Parallel to the force of *Christian Tradition*; unless the Matters to be convey'd were of *Equal Concern*, and the Obligations to propagate them, *Equally* forcible and binding. I shall propose to him an Instance of the force of *Our Tradition*, and than ask his judgment of it. Suppose the Anniversary of the *Powder-Plot* should be kept on foot, by Ringing of Bells, Bonfires, Squibbs, and spitefull Preaching against *All* Catholicks indifferently, and their very Religion it self, as guilty of that Villanous Treason; I would know of him whether the Memory of it, tho' kept alive by this Practical Solemnity but once a year, would not be perpetuated for thousands of Generations, or how it should ever be forgot? If (as I am sure he must) he *grants* it; he must grant withall that the Tradition of *Christ's Doctrine*, which had a source incomparably *larger*, and was of the *highest* Concern to every particular Person not to *desert* it, but to *hold* to it, *practise & live* according to it *Daily*, & *propagate* it to others, must be in a manner infinitely stronger. For, sure, he will not say that the *Hatred* against the *Papists*, which, I fear, is the main Motive to continue the other, is a more powerfull Cause to effect this, than all the *Motives* laid by God, and the Care of the *Salvation* of themselves and their Posterity was for the Body of the Church to *perpetuate* a Doctrine that came from *Heaven*. In a word, this one Instance is enough to shew evidently that he either *grossly mistakes*, or *wilfully perverts* in that Appendix the *whole Subject* about which we are there discoursing. And is such a slight piece, or such a man worth answering, were it not for the Repute he has got, not for writing *for the Church of England*, but for his Hatred and Scribbling *against the Papists*? Since this one Errour is so Fundamentall that it must needs influence all that Discourse of his as far as 'tis *Serious*, or pretends

to *Solidity*; and, so, leaves nothing to be replied to but wilely Shuffles and airy Trifles, which are Frivolous in themselves, and (in his Writings) Endless.

S E C T. I.

*The Author of the Catholique Letters clear'd
from Dr. St.'s borrow'd Calumnies.*

5. **H**AVING behav'd himself thus unfortunately to himself and his Friends ever since he came upon the Stage, Dr. St. comes to settle his *Method*, which he says, he *thinks is most Natural and Effectual to proceed in*, in handling the main Subject of our Debate about the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith. It consists of Four Heads: and I shall follow my Leader, he being such a Master of *Method*, and take them as they lie. The First is, *To shew how unfit J. S. is of all men to undertake this Cause*, who contradicts himself as occasion serves. Certainly, this man has a *Method* as well as a *Logick* peculiar to himself. Does it follow so *Naturally* that Faith needs no Higher Grounds of *Certainty*, because J. S. writes *unconstantly*? Or, does he prove so *Effectually* he has shewn his Grounds do allow *Faith*, as 'tis controverted between us, the *Certainty* due to it's Nature, because I write *weakly*. But, the truth is, his *Method* is to avoid all *Method*; and to wriggle in twenty Impertinent and Invidious things, to make a shew of having said a great deal, tho' to no purpose: and to raise as much *Dust* as he can, that he may run away from the business we are about, and hide himself in the *Mist*. But is he sure that *F. S.* contradicts himself? Impartial men will doubt it, when they shall know, that both those few pretended contradictions he has borrow'd out of *Lominus* and many more were objected

jected and earnestly press'd against me in a far-distant Tribunal; where my self was unknown, and had *few* or rather *no* Friends, but what my *Cause & Defences* gave me: That they were discuss'd by those strictest Judges and compar'd with my Answers, and yet not so much as the least check given me, or any Correction of my Books, even in the least tittle, was order'd; though this be a thing not unusual in such cases: That the business already *transit in rem judicatam*; and that the Satisfaction I gave *then* to Superiours, who could have no imaginable reason to be favourable to me, to the prejudice of Catholick Doctrine, is an abundant clearing of the *Soundness* of my *Writings*, and the *Sincerity* of my *Defences*. It would, I say, be enough to do this, and then leave the Doctor's malice to the Censure of all Ingenuous Persons, for *objecting anew* things of which I was about Eleven years ago, so authentiquely acquitted. But alas! his *Method*, which oblig'd him to speak to the true Point as little as he could for shame, and to fill up an empty figure of an Answer with as many Impertinencies as he could well hook in, led him so *directly* to it, that he could not for his heart avoid it. Should he object *Murther* or any other heinous Crime to a pretended Malefactor, already clear'd of it by his Proper Judges and the Court, every honest man would admire at his folly; but all's meritorious with his Party against the *Papists*. Tho', I say, this be sufficient for my Vindication; yet because those
 * Defences of mine were in *Latin*, and the clearing this Point conduces very much to the shortening and illustrating my future Answer, I shall repeat *here* some *few* particulars of *many* which are found there at large. And First, I shall put some notes to give a clear Light of this business. Next I shall show his *Shallownefs* and *Insincerity* in what he objects. Thirdly, I will put down the most Authentick Approbations of my Books by the

* Clypeus
 Septemplex
 & Vindiciar.

Testimony of Learned Men of all sorts, and beyond all Exception; and then reflect on his Imprudence in making such an objection.

6. For the First, I lay these Notes. 1. That *School-Divines* discourse of *Faith* under another Notion or Consideration than *Controvertists* do. The former treat of it as 'tis a *Theological Virtue*, and the *Material Objects* of it, as reveal'd by a Testimony *formally Divine*: And they prove it to be such by alledging the *Miracles* done to attest it; the wonderfull *Conversion* of the World by it, and the admirable *Effects* issuing from it; as the *Sanctity* of it's Professors that live up to it, the Heroick *Sufferings* of Martyrs, &c. And, because 'tis a *supernatural Virtue*, and, so, depends on God's *supernatural Influence* as much as *Natural Effects* do on His *Power* as Author of *Nature*; hence, they consider it as introduc't by *Supernatural Dispositions inclining* men to it, and God's *Heavenly Grace* making them embrace it and adhere to it constantly. On the other side, *Controvertists*, particularly *We* in our Modern Controversies, being to argue against those who admit whatever was taught by *Christ* to be *Divine*, cannot possibly have the least occasion to treat of it as 'tis such, or use any of the former Arguments that are apt to prove it such; but accommodate our Discourses precisely to make out what those men deny; that is, the *Grounds* by which we come to know assuredly that these or those Points were taught by *Christ*. Much less do we consider Faith as it depends on the *Workings* of God's Holy Spirit, illuminating *Interiorly* the Souls of the Faithfull, and fixing them in their Faith; these being *Invisible* and so Impossible to be brought into Arguments, or produc't against an Adversary in our Controversial Disputes. 2. That 'tis evident that in all my Books I am writing *Controversies*; and, consequently, writing of Faith precisely as 'tis controverted between me and my Opposers:

Opposers: Which manifestly evinces that I treat of it under none of those Considerations *School-Divines* do; in regard none of my Adversaries, (at least professedly) deny it to be *Divine*, or that God's *Grace* is requisite to it. Nor can any man shew so much as *One* Argument in all my Books that looks that way. 3. That, since 'tis manifest beyond all Cavill that we are writing *Controversy*, and consequently treating of *Faith* precisely as 'tis *Controverted*; and there are but Two Points that can be controverted in relation to the *Evincing* or *Defending* the *Truth* of *Christian Faith*: The one, that *what Christ taught was Divine*; the other, that *Christ taught what we now believe*; the Former of which being granted by all the Deserters of the Church, and therefore cannot possibly need to be *Prov'd* by Me, or any in my Circumstances; it follows evidently that the *later* Point is only that which can be debated between me and my Adversaries; that is, we are only to treat of *Faith* as it stands under that Abstraction or Consideration; that is, as it stands under some certain Rule, securing us that it *was taught by Christ*; It being agreed on all hands, that, if he taught it, it *Is Divine*. 4. That tho' this and no other can with any sense be our Task, yet 'tis tedious to stand repeating at every turn this Abstracted Acception of *Faith*, as 'tis found or treated in our Controversies, or reiterating still this reduplication [*as taught by Christ*;] but 'tis enough to have exprest it at first in *Prefaces*, and the *State of the Question*, and afterwards upon occasion in many *signal* passages, which I did very punctually, as appears by my * *Defences*, where I instanc't in Sixty three several places: I might say, I did it in *whole Books*, where I spoke in short, as is seen in my * *Method*; in which very small Treatise 'tis inculcated above twenty times. Whence, where-ever I use the single word [*Faith*] it

* See Clypeus Septemplex from. p. 151. to 194.

* Declaration p. 43.

must necessarily mean *Faith as Controverted*, or, according to what is *Controverted between us*. Such a solicitous Repetition would argue a distrust in me, that my Readers wanted Common Sense; who could not reflect on what was *in hand*, or keep a heedfull eye upon what was *at first*, and *once for all* declar'd and *signally express* in those remarkable places. *Lastly*, That my treating of what Motives or Rule Christian Faith must have in *it self*, or in its own nature to make good its *Truth*, (which is *Essential* to it) as I did particularly in *Faith Vindicated*, does not exceed the bounds of Controversy, or treat of Faith as 'tis a Theological Virtue, or in any Consideration relating to it as *such*: for I still express my self over and over in the *Introduction* to speak of its *Rule*, or of *Faith*, as proveable by its *Rule*; and tho' I do not *there* apply it against any Adversary, yet in the Inferences at the End I do this against Dr. *Tillotson* and Himself, without any Reply for these Fifteen years: Nor, have they any Possible way to come off, but either, by answering *Faith Vindicated*, and shewing there needs no Absolutely Certain Rule to secure us of our having Christian Faith; or, by shewing that they have some Rule Absolutely securing those from Error who rely on it. The same *Introduction*, and the same Answer serves to show how Moral Certainty of the Infallibility of this Rule *is*, and how it *is not* sufficient. For I declare my self * there to speak of the Nature of those Motives (or Rule) in themselves and as laid in Second Causes by Gods Providence to light Mankind in their way to Faith; to which the dimness of Eye-sight, neglect to look at all, or looking the wrong way, even in many particular men, is *Extrinsical and Contingent*. Moral Evidence then of the Rule of Faith's Certainty, nay, even less, may serve many particular men; for they are still secur'd from Error, by adhering to what such a Rule delivers, tho'

* Faith Vindicated Introduction. p. 18.

tho' they *penetrate not* the Grounds of its Certainty; with which it well consists that that *Rule as laid by God to light or satisfy all Mankind*, who are *in their way to Faith*, must be in it self more than Morally Certain, or *must be impossible to be False*; otherwise it *could not* perfectly satisfy acute Schollars that what it aberts is *True*; nor enable Pastors and Learned men to defend the *Truth* of Faith as far as it depends on that Rule; nor *Secure* any man, Learned or Unlearned, from *Erring* in Faith; whereas, by being thus Absolutely Certain, it secures *every man*, tho' never so weak, from *Error* while he follows it, and preserves inviolable the *Truth* of Faith it self.

7. This last Note fully answers his first pretended Contradiction, that *my Chief End in that Treatise (viz. Faith Vindicated)* was to *settle Christian Faith*, and yet that I *speak not of Faith in it self, but as it is controverted*. For I no where meddle with Faith *in it self*, or as it is a Theological Virtue as School-Divines do, but meerly *in order to my Opposers*. With which may well consist, that I may write a Book to *settle Christian Faith* by shewing it must have a Certain Rule, *before* I apply it against my Adversaries, by shewing they have no such Rule, and so no Certainty of their Faith; as I did against Himself and Dr. T. at the End of that Book, and do peremptorily Challenge them to clear themselves of those *Inferences*, and *prove* themselves to be *Holders of Christs Doctrine or Christians*. An Instance will shew how weak this Cavil is. A Scrivener makes a Pen; and his Primary Intention, considering him, *as he is doing that Action*, is that the Pen should be a good one; and his writing taking him precisely as a Pen-maker was *Secondary and Occasional*. And yet writing was for all that his *Primary Intention* as he was a *Scrivener*. Thus it past with me. My *Main, Primary*, and (if he will) *precise*

precise End in that Treatise was to settle Christian Faith, by demonstrating it was to have a sure Foundation: and in this was terminated the particular design of that Book. Now, the doing this was apt to exclude all pretenders to Christianity, who had no such Grounds; but I did not this, till I had ended the Treatise, nor stood applying my Discourses, or striking my Opposer just then with the Weapon I was but a making. Which yet hinders not but the Primary End of writing that whole Treatise was in Order to my Opposers, tho' a little more remotely; and this is so Evident by my Inferences at the End, that none but a Caviller, enrag'd that he could not answer them, would have made such an Objection.

P. 8.

8. Hence his Second, which Equivocates in the word [*Objects*] is frivolous. For I no where treat of the Objects or Mysteries of Faith *in themselves*, or say the Connexion of *their* Terms must be Evident; but only that the Certainty of the *Humane Authority* of the Church, which I make our *Rule*, to know they were taught by Christ, must be prov'd from the Objects or *things without us, viz.* the Nature of *Mankind*, and the Nature of the *Motives* laid to perpetuate Christs Doctrine. And I wonder at his Insincerity to alledge this: when I had particularly forestall'd it in my Introduction (p. 18.) and declar'd there once for all, that in the following Treatise I only spoke of the *Motives to light Mankind in their way to Faith*; Does he think the *Mysteries of Faith* are the *Way to Faith*? Or can he pretend that the *State of the Question*, express'd so carefully beforehand in a *Preface* to signify my meaning throughout the whole Treatise following, is totally to be set aside and neglected; and that only single words pickt out, where for brevity's sake I did not constantly repeat it, are to give my true Sense? What impertinent Brabbling

bling is this? Again, p. 16. 17. I no less punctually declare that I * only treat of the *Objects* or *Points of Faith*, as their *Truth* depends on those *Motives* or *Rule of Faith*. Yet all will not do to a man bent upon Cavill.

* Introduction to Faith Vindicated. p. 16. 17.

9. My last Note, towards the End, let's him see clearly *when*, to *whom*, and *how*, *Infallible Assent* is requisite and not requisite. And I had forestall'd *this* too before in an Elaborate Discourse from p. 131. to p. 158. in *Error Nonplust*; where I shew'd that since Faith must be *True*, and not possible to be a *Lye*, therefore all who have true *Faith* must be out of capacity of being in an *Error*, or must be in some manner *Infallible*. That it was enough simply to *have* Faith, that they be *Materially Infallible*, or not capable of being in an *Error*, by relying on a Ground that *cannot deceive* them (such as is the Testimony of Gods Church) tho' they *see not how* it must be so. Nay, that this is absolutely sufficient for * *All* who are coming to Faith; provided they do not happen to doubt that their Reasons for the Churches Infallibility are *Inconclusive*; and, so, be apt to remain unsatisfy'd; or, are not bound to *maintain* the *Truth* of Faith against Opposers; in which case they are to be able to *see* and *prove* the *Conclusiveness* of their Grounds from some Certain Principle; which I call there to be *Formally Infallible*. This and much more is laid out *there* at large; which prevents most of his Objections *here*. But no notice takes the good Dr. of it. It was, it seems, too great a Mortification to him, to peruse a Book, which he was *highly Concern'd* to answer, and knew he *could not*.

* Error Nonplust. p. 148.

10. His Fourth Contradiction is solv'd in three lines. I treated of the *Humane* Authority of the Church (the *Rule of Faith*) which was *Extrinsical* to Faith as 'tis a Theological Virtue or *Divine*. Yet it being an Extrinsical Argument as *all Testimony* is, I therefore went about to

p. 16.

prove

prove it's force from *Intrinsical Mediums*, fetcht from the Natures of the Things; viz. *Man's Nature*, and the Nature of the *Motives*. Nor can the Certainty of *Witnessing Authority* be prov'd otherwise.

P. 11.

II. His Fifth is clear'd by my first four Notes; which shew that I spoke of *Faith*, which was by the Confession of both Parties *Divine* and *Supernatural*, and for that reason called so by me; but did not treat of it as thus qualified, or go about to *prove* it *Divine*; but prov'd it's Truth meerly as it depended on *Humane Faith* previous to it; and so, did only *formally* treat of that *Humane Faith* it self, on which the Knowledge of *Divine Faith* leans, and by which those coming to Divine Faith are rais'd up to it. Yet what hideous Outcries the Dr. makes here, that by my Doctrine *we are to seek for the Certainty of Faith formally Divine*; That I make *Divine and Supernatural Faith derive it's Certainty from Natural Infallibility, &c.* Tho' he knows as well as that he lives that we make Faith as *Formally Divine* derive it's Certainty from the *Divine Authority* testify'd to us by *Miracles*; That this Establishment of Divine Faith by Supernatural means is presuppos'd to our Question and granted by both sides; and that our only Point is how we may know certainly what was this Divine Faith thus ascertain'd at first. Whoever reads *Third Catholick Letter*. p. 23. 24. will admire with what face he could object these falsehoods, or counterfeit an Ignorance of what has been so often and so clearly told him; and which he had seen so particularly answer'd in my Defences: But this is his usual Sincerity. 'Tis pretty to observe into what a monstrous piece of Nonsense our Dr. has fall'n here: and how because I argue from Supernatural Faith, he thinks I am arguing for it or proving it. Whereas common sense tells every man who has not laid it aside, that he who argues from another thing, *supposes* that other thing, and, so cannot possibly,

possibly, while he does so, go about to *prove* it, or *treat* of it. But it seems *For* and *From* are the same with his great Reason, and not possible to be distinguish'd. He might have seen other * Arguments drawn *from* the *Supernaturality* of Faith, to prove that the *Rule* which is to light intelligent men, who are Unbelievers, to Faith, must be *more then Morally Certain*. But he thought best to chuse the worst; and, while he objected that too, mistook [*From*] for [*For*]; that is, the Premisses for the Conclusion, and the Cart for the Horse.

* Faith Vindicated, Object. 6, p. 149.

12. His Sixth Exception, if pertinent, amounts to this. *I. S.* did not *prove any point Divine and Supernatural*, therefore Dr. St. needs prove no point of Faith he holds to be *truly deriv'd from Christ*: A fair riddance of his whole Task! For the rest; We do not desire him to prove by his Rule *one* determinate point more than *another*; only, since he talks of his *Grounds*, which cannot be *such* unless they derive their solid Virtue of *supporting* to what's *built* on them, we instance now and then in some *main* and *most necessary* Articles; of which, if he can give us no account *how* they come to be *absolutely ascertain'd* by his Ground or Rule, he can give it of *none*. Each Point of Faith is of a *determinate sense*; We shew that *Tradition* gives and ascertains to us this *determinate sense*; and we shew *why* it *must* do so, and *how* it does so, & this with *Absolute Certainty*. Let him shew his Rule has the power to do this, & then pretend we are on equal Ground. But alas! He must not say this who is all for *Moral Certainty*, and fancies nothing above it. For he cannot say by such Grounds any Point [*is*] or [*is True*] while it may be *False* that *they were taught by Christ*; and if he says they [*are or were taught by Christ*], while they [*may not be so*] he in plain terms affirms *the same thing may at once be and not be*. For thither the Doctrine of *Faith's possible falshood* must be reduc'd at last, and the

P. 12.

Greatest of Contradictions will be found to be his *First Principle*.

P. 13.

13. His 7th Exception is answer'd in my last Note; which shews that the Ground upon which the *Truth* of Faith depends must be *more than Morally Certain*; tho' every Believer needs not penetrate the force of those Grounds, or have even *so much as Moral Certainty* of their Conclusiveness. But, what means he when he *Objects* my saying, that, *True Faith, by reason of its Unmoveable Grounds can bear an asserting the Impossibility of it's Falshood*? Can this man do himself a greater prejudice, than by *thus* confessing, that he holds not Christian Faith, *absolutely speaking, True*? Or can he lay a greater scandal on *Christian Faith* it self, than to quarrel at a Position that can give him no displeasure, but by asserting it's *perfect Truth*? If this do not like his new-fashion'd Christian Principles, I suppose he will own the contrary Position, and affirm that *True Faith, by reason of it's Moveable (or Uncertain) Grounds, Cannot bear an asserting the Absolute Impossibility of it's Falshood*; And this is in plain terms to assert, that *absolutely speaking, True Faith may all be False*: which is both *Unchristian*, and *strong Nonsense* to boot. He should have Preach't this to his Auditory at *Guildhall*; and then he should have seen how every honest Hearer, would have abhorr'd his Doctrine, have lookt upon Him as scarce *half a Christian*, and on such a Faith as *absurd, praternatural, and Irrational*, as well as I did.

P. 14. 15.

14. These are the greatest Contradictions the Dr. could pick even out of an Adversaries Book; concerning which he keeps such a *mighty noise, blusters and triumphs*. He tells the Reader, I affirm that *Moral Certainty destroys the Essence of Faith*. And I affirm it does, taking Faith without some absolutely certain Principle, as Demonstration is, to ground it on. For Faith is essentially

ally *True*; and it cannot be *True* to those who see that, notwithstanding it's Grounds which are to prove it *Christ's* Doctrine, it may yet be *none* of his Doctrine. Again, he says I make Moral Certainty *Sufficient* and *Insufficient* for Faith. Distinguish, good Doctor; 'Tis not *Sufficient* for the Ground of Faith as we treat of it; for, if there may be *Deceit* in that Ground, the *Truth* of Faith as to us, sinks: * And yet Moral Certainty, and even *less*, of the force of that Ground is *Sufficient* to many, nay * *All*, so they adhere to a Ground that is *really* Infallible, and *Salvation* is attainable by those Persons. Oh, but *Salvation* is to be had by such a Faith no better grounded; and that's the main business. What? If for want of a firm Ground, Faith *hap to be False*? Who ever said it? or that, in case any Point embrac't upon such a Ground happen to be *Untrue*, it could be a Point of *Faith*, or that any man could be sav'd by vertue of a *Heretical* Tenet, or a *pernicious Falshood*? Yet, for want of Dr. *St's* understanding plain sense, and his applying my words to a wrong subject, I must forfeit my *Sincerity* and *Moral Honesty*; whereas himself forfeits both by *confounding* every thing which I had so * carefully distinguish'd. There is not a tittle objected by himself or *Lominus*, but I distinctly and clearly answer'd in my *Clypeus Septemplex* and *Vindicie*, to the satisfaction of all my Superiours and Judges. Yet this man of *Moral Honesty*, has the Ingenuity to object them afresh, without taking notice of my Answers, or letting the Reader so much as know any such Satisfactory Answers, or any answer at all, had been already given.

14. As for the three Propositions pickt out of my Books apart from the Context, and which, as taken in the *precise words* in which they were exhibited, were censur'd: I desire the Reader to reflect, that these words [*There is no God*] tho' found in the Holy Scripture it self, yet as *separated* from the words adjoining, and express

* See S. 9.

* See Error
Non-pluſt.
P. 148.

* See my Declaration and
Vindicie.

in those *precise* terms, are perfect *Atheism*, and deserve the highest Censure; and yet the same words *as they lie* in the Sacred Book it self with these foregoing words [*The Fool hath said in his heart*] joyn'd with them, the direct *contrary* is signify'd by that place. This was my very case. The words or passages taken *alone*, without the *Prefaces*, declaring the sole *Intent* of the Author, without the *State of the Question*, and other Paragraphs (or words in the same Paragraph) giving light, by the Tenour of the Discourse, to my true meaning, bore a shew as if I had affirm'd that it was requisite to Faith to demonstrate the *Mysteris of Faith*, and among them the *Supernatural Infallibility of the Church*, which is a *Point of Faith*. Especially since there was inserted by the Exhibiter a *Parenthesis* in the middle of the second Proposition, [*he speaks of Propositions of Faith*] whereas there was not a word of any such thing, but about * fifteen times the *contrary*, in the self-same Paragraph: *viz.* That I spoke of *Motives, Premisses, and Grounds of Faith*. Now the Censurers knew not that those Propositions were in any *Book*, or had any *Antecedents* or *Consequents* (as they * publicly declar'd, and I have it under their hands) and, consequently, Censur'd them; as my self should have done, had I been in their Circumstances, and circumvented as they were. As soon as I saw the Censure, I offer'd voluntarily to Subscribe to it; knowing that those Propositions thus singled out, were no more my Doctrine than [*There is no God*] was the Sense of the Sacred Writer; nay * quite *contrary* to it. The Censurers declar'd they were surpriz'd, and * complain'd they were by *indirect* wiles impos'd upon. So at the Arch-Bishop of Paris his Command I writ my *Vindicia*, to manifest the true Sense of those passages *as they lay in my Books*; which I shew'd very clearly and particularly to be, that I only spoke of Faith *as standing under a Rule ascertaining it's Descent from Christ*. My Books being

Vindiciæ J. S.
P. 23. 24.

* Querimonia J. S. p. 70.
and 75.

Ibid. p. 67.

* See Vindiciæ J. S. p. 4.
5. 6. 7.
* Querim.

P. 74

being in *English*, it was order'd that some Persons of great Learning and Repute who understood *English* should examine and testify, whether, taking those Propositions as *they lay in my Books*, the Orthodox Sense I assign'd to them, were indeed my genuine meaning in those places; My Adversary too *allow'd of them to attest it; for indeed their known Probity and Learning was such that it was impossible to except against them; and that Venerable and Pious Personage, Abbot *Montagn*, to whom they were known, it being requir'd, gave Testimony to both those Qualifications in them. They all unanimously attested by their Subscriptions, that the Orthodox Sense I assign'd was indeed the *true meaning of those Places*; and that the *Sense condemn'd was not in those Books, but the direct contrary*; whence follows that when I Subscrib'd the Censure, I subscrib'd only to what had ever been my *own Doctrine*. Those Reverend and Judicious Persons, were Mr *Francis Gage*, Dr. of *Sorbon*; Mr *Thomas Godden*, Dr. of Divinity; Mr *Robert Barclay*, Principal of the *Scotch Colledge in Paris*; Mr *Bonaventure Giffard*, and Mr *John Betham*, then Batchelours of Divinity in *Sorbon*, both of them since, Doctors of the same Faculty, and the former of them now Bishop of *Madaira*; Mr *Edward Cary*, Mr *Edward Lutton*, and Mr *G. K.* The Arch-Bishop of *Paris*, being perfectly satisfied, hoping it might end future Disputes, desired me to Subscribe to the Censure: I refus'd at first, alledging that such a Subscription might be improv'd into a pretence that I had *retracted*. He replied, * *Uteris itaque quâ Subscriptionis formulâ tibi placuerit; Make use therefore of what form of Subscription you please*. I replied, Then I will declare that *I do Subscribe*, not retracting my *Doctrine* but persisting in it; which he allow'd; and I did it in the self-same terms; adding, that I *persisted* in it as being free from Censure, and *approv'd* by very Eminent Personages.

* App. seu
Quer. p. 76.
77.

Ibid. p. 62.

Ibid. p. 57. 58

Ibid. p. 65.

* App. seu
Quer. p. 65.

Ibid. p. 77.

Ibid.

Ibid. p. 69.

p. 70.

ges. Which done, the Censurers were order'd nay *commanded* to make me Satisfaction by an Instrument Sign'd by them both; declaring that *no Proposition in any Book of mine was toucht by their Censure*. Could there be a greater and more Authentick Clearing my Books and Doctrine from being Censur'd than that was; or, might not Dr St. by parity of reason as well have pretended that the Scripture teaches *Atheism*, or that King *David* deserv'd to be Censur'd, for saying *There is no God*, as that any Proposition, *as found in my Books*, was there Censur'd or Declar'd Heretical.

15. And now to lay open some of the Doctor's *Falshoods* upon this occasion; They are these. 1. *That the main Design of my Catholick Letters are there declar'd to be no Catholick Doctrine*. Well bowl'd Doctor. Have I a word there pretending to shew the *Mysteries* of Faith, or the Authority of the Church [that is *believ'd by Faith*] that is it's *Supernatural* Infallibility by Assistance of the Holy Ghost, to be Demonstrable? Is it not shewn you in most express words (*Third Cath. Letter. p. 22. 23.*) and in many other places) that we speak only of the * *Humane* Authority of the Church, which is to be prov'd by *Natural Medinms*, and not of the other which is *believ'd* by the Faithfull? This then is a meer forg'd pretence against your own Conscience and perfect Knowledge. 2. That I was Censur'd and retracted: whereas 'tis manifest not any thing as it lay in *my Books* (that is indeed nothing of *mine*) was Censur'd; nor did I subscribe, otherwise than as not Retracting *my Doctrine*, but *persisting in it* as being free from Censure. This the Arch Bishop of *Paris* allow'd, and the Censurers themselves judged to be *Just* and *True*, and upon those terms acquitted me and made me *Satisfaction*. 3. He says, that if *this* (the Sense Condemn'd) be not *Catholick Doctrine*, he is Infallibly Certain *my Letters are far from being Catholick*

* Third Catho. Letter.
p. 23. l. 11. 12.
Ibid. p. 22.
L. 32. 33.

P. 5.

tholick in their Sense. Now, not one word is there in those *Letters* which is the Sense Condemn'd, as I shew'd lately; however I am glad he who has still been so high against all Infallibility in his Writings, and deny'd it to the Catholick, or any *Church*, owns it at least in *Himself*. I see now what Grounds he went upon when he would not make a Candid *Retraction* of his *Irenicum*. Certainly this man would persuade us to take his word for our *Rule of Faith*. But the ill luck, is his Infallibility is evidently prov'd already to be willfull Forgery, against plain and Authentick matter of Fact. He says the A. B. of D. *averts* many fine things already answer'd, and that my *Plea was ridiculous*. Which is false for any thing he or I know. For, that Illustrious Personage deny'd that Book of *Lominus* to be *his*, or did any man own it; but it came out surreptitiously without the Approbation of *any* man, under an *unknown* name, nay, without so much as the Printers name to it; which was punishable by the Laws there. Whence we may judge of our Drs. sincerity: In his Second Letter to Mr. G. p. 8. by putting *Herefis Blacloana* in the Margent over against his Appeal to *F. W.* He hinted, that that Venerable Person was Author of that Book. Beat off from that False and Ungrounded pretence, he has found us another Author for it; and I expect in his next piece we shall have a Third or Fourth; according as his fancy, so heated now that it has shaken off all regard to Civility, shall prompt him. Again, he shews us how wonderfully ingenuous he is, by his quoting against me the railing Book of an unknown Adversary, which had besides all the Marks of a Libel in it; and overslipping the Attestation of Eight Worthy Divines of great repute; who, openly and *owning their names*, did witness that those *places*, in my Books, did not bear the *Sense* in which those words *pick't out* thence were censur'd.

cenfur'd. Add that Dr. *St.* knew all these particulars were clear'd satisfactorily, since it appears (by his quoting them) he had read my *Defences*, in which they are *printed at large*. Which Common Sense may assure him I durst not have done, in the Life-time of all the Persons mention'd and concern'd, without quite losing my Cause; Nay I should have expos'd my self to new Accusations as a Falsifier, had I not dealt sincerely to a tittle, and preserv'd all the Authentick Originals in my own hands, for the Justification of my *Defences*, which I yet have. I charge the Dr. then, to have publisht against me *Willfull and Notorious Falshoods*, which he had reason to *know* to be such. Yet we are still to think he did all this out of his pure *Lobe to Royal Honesty*, of which he makes such a Saintly Profession. I Challenge him moreover to shew me any *one* Catholique Writer of any Eminency (I do profess I do not know so much as *one* of any degree whatever) whoever *Censur'd* this Position, that the Infallibility of the Churches Humane Authority, antecedent to Faith, and deriving down Christ's Doctrine might be demonstrated; which is all I require in my *Catholick Letters*. Whereas the * Right Reverend *F.W.* has named him divers, both Ancient and Modern, who follow that Method in general; and I have quoted * divers Eminent Controvertists as occasion serv'd, and particularly insisted on * two beyond all Exception, *F. Fisher* here in *England*, and *Dominicus de Sta Trinitate*, who writ and printed his Book at *Rome*, and had it approv'd by the *Magister Sacri Palatii*, who take the same way I do, almost to a tittle. I may add, to the Drs. greater *confusion*, the Authority of the Arch-Bishop of *D.* himself, and of all those Eminent Persons who have approv'd my Doctrine, as shall be seen hereafter.

16. Not a man then has Dr *St.* on his side, but one unknown

P. 14.

* See Third
Cath. Letter.
P. 21. 22.

* Declaratio
Sergeantii.

p. 40.

* App p. 209.
ad p. 246.

known and altogether unapprov'd Author *Lominus*, and a bitter Adversary to me besides; out of whose Falshoods, interlarded with his own, and by his Concealing my *Replies* to all he *objects* (and those such as fully satisfy'd my Judges and Superiours) he makes a shift to patch up his Calumnies. We will see next, whether (to his further shame) my Books or Doctrin have not had Testimonials of greater weight to approve and authenticate them, than that of *Lominus* was to Condemn them.

17. In the first place that Blessed and Glorious Martyr, the Illustrious, and Eminently Learned *Oliver Plunket*, Arch-Bishop of *Armagh* and Primate of all *Ireland*, as soon as he heard my Books were oppos'd, out of his meer Justice, love of Truth and the Esteem he had of my Doctrin, unsought to nay *unthought* of, sent me out of *Ireland*, an Approbation of it writ with his own hand, and Seal'd with his Archiepiscopall Seal, in these words.

* [*Infra scripti testamur, &c. Wee underwritten do attest that we have read thorough diligently and accurately, and that with both Profit and Pleasure, three Books writ in the English Dialect, Publish'd by that Learned Person Mr. John Sergeant, whose Titles and Arguments are these; Surefooting in Christianity, Faith vindicated, and Reason against Rallery; In which I have not only found nothing against the Integrity of the True Faith and of good manners; but, moreover, Clear and Solid Principles, which admirably conspire to the Establishing and confirming the Catholick Doctrin. For, both by Reasons and Authorities they excellently impugn the Protestants affirming the Holy Scripture is the only Rule of Faith; and vigorously maintain that the genuin Doctrin of Christ and his Apostles has descended, by the force of Tradition, from Century to Century, nay from year to year, incorruptedly to our time, and still remains inviolably in the Orthodox Church. In Testimony whereof we have Subscrib'd, and have caus'd our*

* Declaratio
Sergeantis.
p. 55.

portatil Seal to be affixt, this 15th of March 1674. at Armagh
Olibertus Armathanus, totius Hibernia Primas.

Can any man imagin that this Grave and Learned Personage, who had for twelve years profess'd Divinity in the *Sacra Congregatio at Rome*, and had been advanc'd by them to this high Dignity, would have hazarded his Credit there, in approving so highly the Writings of one who was a Stranger to him and no ways capable to oblige him, had he not been perfectly assur'd there was *nothing* Censurable in them? Yet, this, tho' known to our ingenuous Dr. is nothing with him. He crys still *Lominus for my money*, let him be what he will; and assures the Reader upon his *Morall Honesty*, he is *Infallibly Certain* my Doctrin in my *Letters* is not Catholick.

18. The next in Dignity is that Illustrious and Right Reverend Personage Mr. Peter Talbot Arch Bishop of Dublin, who dy'd a Confessor of the Catholick Faith in Dublin Castle in the time of that truly *Hellish*, tho' not *Papist* Plot. This Eminent Person more than once has approv'd and highly commended my Doctrin.* [*The Author of Surefooting* (says he) *has with great zeal writ divers Treatises of this matter (viz. the force of Tradition) and has overwhelm'd those who defend only Morall Certainty in Faith with so great Confusion that they can no way clear themselves from the blemish of Atheism, to which their Principles and meer Probability of Faith lead; of which crime the foresaid Author proves them Guilty beyond all possibility of Reply. And* a little after, he acknowledges that *the Rule of Faith (viz. in our Controversies) is the Humane Authority of the Church; and, that it must be an Infalible Directress; otherwise it might lead us out of the way.* Unfortunate Dr. St. to quote an Authority against me, which so highly approves my Doctrin and condemns *his* as *leading to Atheism!* The Reader may hence discern how likely 'tis the Archbishop of Dublin should be the Author of *Lominus* his Book, where

*A Sovereign Remedy against Heresy and Atheism. p. 28. See my Declara. p 95.

Ibid. p. 29. 30.

* where he and Dr. Tillotson are praised for Writing so Catholickly against me; whereas that Right Reverend Prelate so highly extolls my Books as writing so *unanimously* against Them. Lastly, in his Appendix to that Book of his cited above, he has this solid Discourse.

* Hares. Blacloana. p.

* [*Altho' Tradition does not demonstrate or conclude evidently the Divinity of Christ, nor consequently can demonstrate or conclude evidently that the Revelation of our Faith was Divine; yet 'tis a Conclusive Argument ad hominem, against Protestants and all those who acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, that God reveal'd all the Articles which the Roman Catholick Church professes, in regard they acknowledge Christ to be God. And thus the Author of Sure-footing, Faith Vindicated, &c. argues invincibly against his Adversaries for the Conclusive Evidence (by the force of Tradition) that God reveal'd all the Articles of the Roman Catholick Faith, out of the Supposition that Christ is God. Note that this Appendix was write purposely to clear me, after the Conference in Abbot Montague's Chamber: where tho' I would not then answer to propositions taken out of books, when no Books were there to clear them by the Context; Yet, after I had the Objections in writing, I did answer them; and this to the* * Satisfaction of the Arch-Bishop himself, and of * Dr. Gough who was present, and prejudic'd formerly against my Writings.

* Declaration p. 99.

* Querim. p. 81. & Declaration. p. 70.
* Declaratio: p. 69. 70.

19. I had compriz'd the Sum of my Doctrine into a short Treatise, Entituled, *A Method to arrive at Satisfaction in Religion*; which when I was at Paris I translated into Latin, and shew'd it to that Excellent Prelate the Bishop of Condom; my singular Friend and Patron, desiring his Judgment of it. He read it, and at my request made his Exceptions; which being clear'd by me, he askt me why I did not Print it? I reply'd I would, so his *Grandeur* would please to give me leave to Dedicate it to himself. Which obtain'd, it was pro-

pos'd to the Sorbon for their Approbation of it, the former of them (Monsieur *Pirot*) testifying *it contain'd nothing against Faith or good manners, &c* the later of them (Dr *Gage*) added that *the most certain Rule of Faith was in that Treatise exactly settled and invincibly defended*. But still obscure *Lominus* is worth twenty *Sorbons* in Dr. *St's* Learned Judgment. Tho' 'tis here to be observed that the Bishop of *Condoms* Approbation was antecedent to theirs; not only as *allowing* and *owning* the Book, but as *inviting* me to *Print* it.

20. I alledge in the Fourth place the Testimony of my Superiour here in *England*, Mr. *Humphrey Ellice*, an Ancient Dr. and Professor of Divinity, and late Dean of our Catholick Chapter; whose Sanctity of Life and solid Judgment gave him a high Esteem with all that knew him. This Grave and Venerable Person, besides the Ordinary and Customary Approbation of my Books, added that *They do clearly demonstrate, out of the very nature of Ecclesiastical Tradition, that the Doctrin delivered by Christ and his Apostles, was inviolably conserv'd in the Roman Catholick and Apostolick Church even to this Age in which we now live; and by Irrefragable force of Reason did evidently convince the Grounds of the Hereticks* (meaning Dr. *St.* and Dr. *Till* against whom I had writ) *to be meer Tricks and vain Fallacies*. But still *Lominus* (that is the Lord knows who) is Dr. *St's* only Saint and Infallible Oracle.

21. It were not amiss to add next the Testimony or rather Judgment of that deservedly Esteemed, and Learned man, Mr. *R. H.* Author of *The Guide of Controversy*. This Excellent Writer, though he inclines rather to the School-opinion of the sufficiency of Moral Certainty, yet, like a truly ingenuous and Charitable man, preferring the Common Good of Christianity before his own private Sentiment, after having discours'd according to his own Grounds, he, in allusion to my way of proceeding, subjoyns

subjoyns these words: [*But then, if any, after all this, can make good any farther Certainty in such Tradition; I know no Party, if Christian, that has any Interest to oppose him — The stronger any one can make this Faith, they have all reason to like it the better.*] By which 'tis apparent that he is so far from condemning and censuring the way I take, that he declares 'tis *not the Interest of any Party, if Christian*, to oppose it; and that himself and every one ought to like it better than the other way, so it could be made good. And, that it can, my best Reason tells me; since, as appears by my *Method*, it has born the Test of being reduc't even to *Self-Evidence*; and the miserable shifts and Evasions, to which the most Learned of our Adversaries are driven, to avoid it's force, do more and more assure me 'tis not at all hard to compass it.

22. In the last place, to omit many others, I shall put the Testimony of that very Reverend Person F. *Martin Harney*, Dr. of Divinity of the University of *Louvain*, and Principal Regent of the General Studies of the Order of *St Dominick*: Who being askt at *Rome* (where he was at the time of the Contest) his Judgment of my Doctrin, compriz'd in my *Method*, and of the Sense of the three Propositions, as they lie in my Books, gave under his hand this Testimonial of both. *I under-written have attentively read the Method writ by Mr John Sergeant, and his Vindication of the three Propositions pickt out of his Books; and I have found that the Method is sound Doctrin, and usefull to reduce many to the Catholick Faith. And in his Vindicia 'tis plainly demonstrated that the foresaid Propositions, as written by the Author, do make a Sense altogether Orthodox.* This Reverend Person I had never seen, nor heard of; nor could any thing but the love of Truth move him to this Approbation; nay, he must have lost much Credit with the *Sacra Congregatio*, had my Doctrin been prov'd *Unorthodox*, or the Propositions in my Book, (as *Infalible* Dr. *St.* affirms) *Heretical*.

23. Modesty forbids me to mention the excessive *Encomiums* of that Eminent Controvertist Mr. *Edward Worsley*, a Father of the Society; who, though utterly unknown to me, took such a Friendship for me upon the reading my Books, and in all places where he came extoll'd my poor Endeavours with such immoderate Expressions, that to save my blushes in rehearsing them I intreat those who have the Curiosity to read them in my *Declaratio* from p. 73. to p. 78. I shew'd them to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Castlemain*, who was pleas'd to do me the right to attest them to be his hand-writing. The same noble Personage & as many as knew F. *Worsley*, will, I doubt not, do that right to his Memory, as to witness for him that as he was Second to none in ability to distinguish between Sound and Tainted Doctrine; so his sincere Candour and Integrity set him as far above the humour of Flattery, as my Meanness could incline any to it.

24. The Sum of my present Defence is this. Eight Divines of great Repute appointed by the Arch-Bishop of *Paris*, and admitted by my Adversary himself, do unanimously attest that *the Sense condemn'd is not* in my Books, but the *contrary*. My Judge clears me, the Censurers are commanded to make me Satisfaction. The Highest Tribunal allows my Plea, and acquits me. Primates, Arch-Bishops, Bishops, the *Sorbon*, Eminent Divines, and even those who take another way in their Writings, approve and commend my Doctrine, and most of them in very high and extraordinary expressions; my own Superiour does the same; nay even those, who were formerly highly prejudic'd, declar'd themselves satisfy'd in it. So that poor Dr. *St.* is left alone to ballance against all this weighty Authority, with one *Lomius*, a meer *Utopian*, or *Man in the Moon*; on whose sole *no-Authority* he grounds all his senseless Calumnies.

Calumnies. Was ever weak man so baffled! Add, that he *knew* that all these *Defences* of mine had been *made* and *accepted* many years ago, and those Authorities *alleg'd*, and my Doctrine thus *approv'd* and *clear'd*; yet he had not the Candour to let his Reader have the least hint of any of those particulars; which argues not too great *love of Moral Honesty*. Nor does he take off any *one* Answer of those *many* I had given; but only says over again rawly some few things objected, reply'd to, and printed fourteen Years ago; and plays upon a double-sens't word or two by applying them still to wrong Subjects. which is in effect to tell the Reader he must either talk insignificantly against evident matter of Fact, or say just nothing, and to confess in plain terms he is at a perfect *Nonplus*.

25. To close this present business I desire the Reader to reflect that those Judges, Approvers and Commenders of my Books and Doctrine, liv'd generally in divers and distant Nations, were of different Faculties and Universities, of different Education, different Orders, and (to some degree) of different Principles and Interests; some of them of slight acquaintance; divers utterly unknown to me, or I to Them. So that, 'tis impossible to imagine that any thing but the *Force of Truth* and the *Integrity* of my way of proving the Certainty of our Faith as to it's being taught by *Jesus Christ*, could make them conspire to allow or abet my Writings so heartily and unanimously. Nor could there be any Human inducements to make them so partial to a private man every way inconsiderable, and of no Esteem at all but what my Writings and Principles gave me. Whence, though *no one Church*, as Dr. St. weakly objects, has ever *own'd my Doctrine* (to give formal Approbations of Controversial or Theological Writings not being a work proper for *Churches*) yet, the Dignity of the Persons and all these Circumstances consider'd,

sider'd, I conceive it may amount to the full weight of the Judgment of any *one* particular Church whatsoever, that my Doctrin is Sound and Orthodox. Nor will he, I believe, find that any work of a particular Writer hath had more Authentick Testimonials for it, than my poor Endeavours have had; except that of the never-enough-praised, the Bishop of *Condom*. And 'tis not the least Confirmation of their Integrity that they have been twice brought to the Tryal, (at *Paris* and *Rome*) and nothing unsound found in them. Though I must do the Doctor the right to acknowledge he has spoke *one* (and hitherto *but one*) true word: but he is to be pardon'd for prevaricating from his constant method of speaking Falshoods, for it was at unawares, and he knew not he did so; The Truth he spoke against his will was this, *That I hardly escaped Censure at Rome*: and therefore, to make his words good, I'll tell him how it was. All my Books were sent thither to Cardinal *Barberin*; and amongst them one written by the Right Honourable my Lord Chancellour *Hyde*, in defence of Dr. *St.* against Mr. *Cressy*; pretending (the Title of this last being torn out) they were all writ by the same Author, *my self*; There went with them a desire to His Eminency, that, not to give them the trouble of Perusing them All, he would cause only *this last* of my Lord Chancellour's to be read; and, by the Character he receiv'd of *that*, to judge whether *all the rest* writ by that Author ought not to be *Condemn'd*. He gave them to an English Divine to keep, who knew nothing of the Contest; ordering him to read only *That*, and give him a faithfull account of it as soon as he could. While he was reading it, God's Providence so order'd it, that an *English* Gentleman, his acquaintance, came accidentally into his Chamber, and finding all my Books on his Table, askt how they came there? He, hearing *me* nam'd as their Author, admir'd,
and

and said he could not believe they were *mine*; in regard he had heard I was a Writer for Catholick Faith; whereas this Author was of far other Principles. After some perusing it, my Friend found it was my Lord Chancellor's Book foisted in for one of mine. Which understood by my Friend's Testimony and the finding all the other Books to run in a quite different strain, they inform'd the Protector of the *Fourbe* that was put upon him, and so my poor Books escap'd scot-free. By this or some such Stratagem they might perhaps have been condemn'd, but that there was any danger of it when my Defences were seen and compar'd with the Accusations, *Infallible Dr. St.* is the first man that ever inform'd us. But, what would we have from a man that can scarce speak a word of liquid Truth!

26. But, tho' *Dr. St.* has neither manag'd this invidious Cavil *Solidly*, nor (he must pardon me) *honestly* or justly, according to any *Moral Honesty* but his own, which he has told us he so *loves*: Has he at least deserv'd the Commendation given to the *Unjust Steward*; has he done *wisely*, or, in any degree, *prudently*? Let's see. In his *Irenicum*, he * had *Sacrificed the whole Order of Bishops to the pleasure of the Magistrate or the Mobile*, and *actually degraded them into the rank of Presbyters*; or, to give us a more compleat Map of that ill Book, that he had given us there a *curtail'd kind of Episcopacy coldly and faintly allow'd*, *Presbytery strongly pleaded for*, *Independency much favour'd*, and (says my Author) *if my Memory fails me not, in the matter of Tithes a spicing of Anabaptistry and Quakerism*. One would think by this description the name of that Book should be *LEGION*, and that such pestilent Principles were needfull to be *retracted*. It seems the Bishops who were most concern'd, durst not attacke such a numerous Army of private-spirited Enemies, drawn-up into one Body. For himself assures us that

* Answer to a Letter against Mr. Lowth, in Defence of Dr. St. p. 8.
Ibid. p. 7.

* See Answer
to M. Lowth's

Letter, p. 22.

* Answer to
a Letter a-

gainst Mr. L.
p. 8.

** the Bishops and Regular Clergy treated him with more kind-
ness then so much as to mention any such thing as a Recantation.*

Nay, his Vindicator tell us moreover that ** the Prudent
and Reverend Governours of their Church did admire the Per-*

formance. Well ! But what provision was made in the
mean time against the mischief and Scandall ? Could this
man have done the Bishops a greater disparagement,
than to tell the World they prefer'd a Personal Civi-
lity and a Complementary virtue before the care of
Christs Institution, and their own most particular In-
terest ? But, tho' they were over-civil to him, why had
not he the Goodness by a voluntary Recantation to give
a stop to the spreading that contagious Doctrin, if in-
deed he did not hold it still ? He could not think it
pleas'd them, nor that their shews of *Kindness* were real
and hearty. However his Vindicatour Brags *they made
choice of him to undertake the Defence of the Conferences with*

Ibid p. 8.

F. Fisher. Yet so, says the other, *as Mr Prynne, a man of
a restless Spirit and unsettled judgment was put to the Re-
cords in the Tower to employ his busy mind.* Well, but how
came he off with that Task ? A fair occasion might have
been taken there to set all right again, had the Dr. pleas'd.

Ibid. p. 34.

But he was so far from that, that Mr. Lowth tells him,
It would have discompos'd the Arch-Bishop upon the Scaffold,
had he foreseen he should have had such a Vindicatour ;
and that *he finds little amends there for his Irenicum Do-*
ctrins, but rather an Evident Confirmation of them, if not
doing worse. This is still more and more obstinate ; and a
kind of *buffing* those, who had so over-civilly forborn
him, by doing still the same or worse. Yet afterwards,
I know not *how* or *why*, he made some ambidextrous Re-
tractations, which left all understanding men dissatisfy'd,
as well as Mr. Lowth ; tho' he, about to publish a book of
Church-Government & the *Irenicum* Doctrines crossing
his way hapt to be the sole man that oppos'd them pub-
lickly,

lickly, tho' multitudes of the most hearty, most Learned, and most Eminent Protestants utterly dislik't them. But, first he writ to him civilly and *upon honest Conditions* would have wav'd him. But the Dr. had got too much head by this kind Connivence, and so he could get *no other Answer, but Scorn and some foul play*; The two main Ingredients in the Doctors Constitution, as my self too frequently experience. Hereupon that honest and plain-dealing Gentleman, whom all true lovers of *Christ's Institution* and particularly all genuin Members of the Church of *England* ought to respect for his undaunted love of Truth, and firmness to Church-Principles, did animadvert upon him severely; as an incorrigible Wronger of such Sacred Concerns deserv'd. He demands in behalf of the Church he would make a *Recantation as Publick as the Error, Scandal and Offence had been*. The Doctor setts on a *Jack Pudding* to abuse and scoff at him; one (says my Author) who has * *hackney'd* out himself to write *against his Conscience and Judgment*, as appears by his *own Letters*. A fit man for Dr. *St's* purpose. This pleasant Gentleman pretended such a *Recantation* was *already made*. To which Mr. *Lowth's* Vindicator (a person of a solid judgment and moderate temper, and, as is seen, p. 23. a kind Friend to Dr. *St.*) reply'd, that all amounted to little better than a say so. He shews that what is cited out of the *General Conferences* was a *scurvy palliation of the matter*. That his Book [*The Unreasonableness of Separation*] signify'd no more than *Motives to compliance in the Judgment of Interest or Discretion*; and for the most part might be urg'd for any settled Constitution, even that of *Geneva* or *Amsterdam*. That any man might get easily off what He had said; and each Party, as the Tide turn'd, might apply them to their own advantage. That the Doctor though he pretended *Mutability of Church Government in his Irenicum*, yet he had *perpetually fixt the Presbytery by Divine Right Unalterable*.

Ibid. p. 17.

Ibid.

Answer to
Mr. Lowth.
P. 17.* Postscript
to an Answer
to a Letter
against Mr
Lowth.

P. 14.

P. 4.

P. 15.

P. 13.

- That the Recantation was far from hearty ; in regard that, altho' his Vindicator *freely confesses* the Fault, and Mr. Lowth to be in the right, yet He *with the same breath reviles him*. Lastly, to omit many other particulars, That (which I have most reason to reflect on) *the Dean*, when he speaks of *Church Authority*, takes away with one hand what he gives with the other ; That the *Authority* of (meerly) *proposing matters of Faith* and *directing men in Religion*, is no Authority at all ; nay that they rather imply a Power in those to whom they are propos'd, at *Discretion* to reject them ; and that it makes the Church's Authority, *precarious*, and lays her open to all manner of *Hereticks*. This is what I ever judg'd lay at the bottom of his heart ; that in things belonging to *Faith*, he sets the judgement of every one of his *Sober Enquirers* above the Church's. Which made me reflect so severely upon it in my *Errour Nonplust*, and in divers other places of my *Third Catholick Letter*. But of late, the juncture (as he hopes) being more favourable, he is gone beyond his former self ; for in his Second Letter to Mr. G. he confidently affirms that *every Sober Enquirer may without the Church's Help find out all necessary Points of Faith* in Scripture. Now, *Proposing* and *Directing* are some kind of *Help*, but here they are both deny'd it seems ; and all *Help* from the Church, as to the matter of saving Faith is deny'd. This then seems to be the *Antecedent Belief* the Dr. sets up, and thence *inferrs*, That a man may be in a State of Salvation in his single and private Capacity apart, and out of all Church Society and Ecclesiastical Communion, tho' he live where it is to be had ; which (says the Answerer) utterly overthrows all Church Government. This ought to give every honest man who loves Order and Government (of what Judgment soever he be) such grounded Jealousies that he is setting up a *Babel* of No-Church-men against *Christ's Church*, that no satisfaction competent, unless the several Propositions be extracted out of his Books,

* See the Answer to a Letter written against Mr. Lowth. p. 23.

Books, and either formally and exprefsly retracted, or else that he shew that, *as they ly in his Books* they bear not that wicked Sense they seem to do, neither of which has been done. Nay, lest he should deal slipperily by *Common* and *palliating* words, at which he is very expert; it will be farther requisit that he be oblig'd to write against those ill Tenets *himself*, and offer *convincing reasons* to prove them False; that so men may see it comes *from his heart*. And this done and the Interest of *Truth* once indemnify'd, he is one of the worst Christians who refuses to honour him far more than if he had never lapst. *Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus.*

27. What concerns Me particularly is to note hence the prodigious *Imprudence* of Dr. St. in objecting against me *Self contradictions*, which have long ago been clear'd; and the Dissatisfaction of two or three Roman-Catholics (for I know of no more) who became well satisfy'd when they had read my Books, and compar'd them with my Explication; and when as He knew my self after a severe Trial was clear'd by my Judges (which he will never be;) and during the time of it, when it was most dangerous for any to stand up for me, my Books and Doctrin were most authentickly approv'd nay highly commended by most Eminent Authority: What a madness was it for him to object *falsly* and against evident matter of Fact that I *retracted*. Whenas all the while, he knew himself had had the misfortune to have writ such unsound Doctrin, that his Vindicator is *forc't* to confess it as his best Plea, that *he has retracted* it; and yet tho', as 'tis said, he has done it on his fashion, he is still apprehended to be so *hollow*, that he cannot yet gain the Belief to have done any more than *palliate* his gross Errors; to be *inconsistent* with himself, and to *take away* Answer to a
from the Church with one hand what he gives it with the other: Let. against
Of these things he never yet clear'd himself, nor can; but Mr Lowth. p.
13. 23. 24.

is still accus'd of harbouring the same Errours in his breast, nay to grow still *worse and worse*. Which I was so far from desiring to lay open, that I civilly insinuated it afar off in my *Third Catholick Letter*, p. 20. without so much as naming his Person; that I might keep him from such Impertinent and Extrinsicall Topicks, which the Reader may observe, do, for want of better, make up three quarters of his Controversial Writings.

S E C T. II.

How Dr. St. settles the true State of the Controversy.

P. 15.

28. **I** Have been longer about this First Section than seem'd needfull. But the Influence it has upon our future Dispute will recompence my trouble, and excuse my Prolixity. The Second thing his *Method* leads him to (for hitherto it has led him quite out of the way) is to *state the Controversy*. And to this end, he acquaints us with the *Occasion of the Conference*; which was that Mr. G. affirm'd in some company that no Protestant could shew any Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith; and that Mr. T. had promis'd him that if Dr. St. were not able to manifest the contrary, he would forsake his Communion. Will the Dr hold to these words? 'Tis plain here that Mr. G. demanded he should shew Grounds to ascertain his Faith absolutely. Mr. T. expected he should manifest they had such Grounds as did ascertain their Faith; and, if he could not, was to leave his Communion: Lastly, that Dr. St. by accepting the Challenge, became engag'd to satisfy Mr T's. expectation, and to manifest the contrary to what Mr G. had asserted; that is to manifest he had Grounds of Absolute Certainty for his Faith; or, (which comes to the same) for Christian Faith upon his Grounds being

being taught by *Christ*. And, how did the Dr. acquit himself, and perform this? Why, he assign'd *Scripture* for the Ground or Rule of his Faith, and *Universal Tradition* for the *Proof* of the *Books of Scripture*. All the company knew this before. For, both sides *knew*, *held* and *granted* already that the Book of Scripture was prov'd by Universal Tradition, and every one knew too that Dr *St.* would assign *It* for the *Ground* or *Rule* of his Faith. Wherefore, unless all the company were out of their Wits, surely something more was expected; and what could *that* be, but that he should manifest his Faith was *absolutely Certain* by relying on that Rule, or that the Rule he assign'd, gave *him*, and *his*, Absolute Certainty of their *Faith*, or of those *Tenets* which they held upon it. For, it being agreed on both sides that the *Sense of the Scripture* was in it self True Faith, Gods Word, and as such to be embrac't, the only Question was of the *sense of Scripture* as to us, or as to our knowledge of it: And of ~~This~~ the Dr was to shew and manifest he had Absolute Certainty by any way *his* Grounds afforded him; otherwise, he might *fall short* or be *wrong* in the knowing Scriptures *Sense* (that is, in his Faith) tho' the *Letter* were never so Certain. Again, by his *counterposing* to those words of his [*than you can have for the points in difference between us*] 'tis manifest the contest was, whether he had Absolute Certainty of those *Points* he held upon *his* Rule. What says the Dr now to this plain *state of the Controversy*?

29. First he changes the *Ground of Absolute Certainty* for *his Faith* into proving the *Absolute Certainty of the Ground or Rule of his Faith*: which transposes the Terms of the Question, and alters the whole business. For *Absolute Certainty for Faith* engages him to shew the *Doxtrin* or *Tenets* of Faith to be thus Certain; whereas [*Absolute Certainty of the Rule of our Faith*] makes *Absolute Certainty*

Page 132. ult.
& p. 16. l. 1. 2.

tainty affect the *Rule*, but leaves all Faith Uncertain, unless the pretended Rule proves a good one, and renders the *Doftrin* of Christian Faith, confifting of many *particular* Points, thus Absolutely Certain; which himfelf will tell us afterwards, he will not ftand to. Next, he Equivocates in the word [*Scripture*] which may either mean the *Letter*, or the *Sense* of it. Now the *Sense* of it being *Faith*, 'tis *That* only could be meant by Mr. G. and of which it was affirmed he could not fhew Grounds abfolutely afcertaining it; The *Sense*, I fay, of Scripture, could only be *question'd* fince the Letter was *agreed to*. Wherefore to alledge *Tradition* for his Proof of what his Grounds will not allow to it, *viz.* to bring down the *Sense* of Scripture or Faith, and turn it off to the fhewing Certainty of the Letter, which was out of *Queftion*, is a moft palpable prevarication. 3. He quite forgets to fhew that *any* Point of his Faith or *all* of it, (fpeaking of the Controverted or Dogmatical Points as we do) may not be *False*, notwithstanding his Proof for the Certainty of its *Letter*: which if it be, 'tis not *Faith*; unlefs he will fay the Points of his *Faith* may be fo many *Untruths*. 4. It has been preft upon him over and over in * my Catholick Letters to fhew how his Rule influences his Affent of Faith with Absolute Certainty. It has been inculcated to him how both [*Rule*] and [*Ground*] are *Relative* words; and, therefore, that he could not pretend they were *to him* Absolutely-Certain Grounds for his Faith, unlefs he fhew'd how they made him Absolutely Certain of that *Faith* of his, which was the *Correlate*. Which tho' the moft material Point, and moft ftrongly preft upon him, he takes no notice of in his whole Reply; and it fhall be feen that, when he comes to touch upon that Point (after his fafhion) hereafter, he is forc't to confeff they are *no* Absolutely Certain Ground or Rule to him at all. Laftly, that, when (*Faith* being *Truth*)

* First Cath.
 Letter. p. 22.
 Third Cath.
 Letter. p. 66.
 67. 68. 69.

Truth) the Question was whether he had any such Ground as could *conclude* it *True* that Christ had taught his Faith, and consequently whether he has *any Faith at all*; he slips over *That*, and rambles into a Discourse about *more or less* Faith in Scripture, instead of shewing he had *any*. Other shifts he has, but *these* are his master-pieces: So that his whole performance, as to the Conference, amounted to no more, than to take up the Bible in his hand, and cry aloud [*Look ye, Gentlemen, here is my Ground or Rule of Faith; and your selves must confess 'tis Absolutely Certain; and, therefore, you cannot deny but I have shewn you the Ground of Absolute Certainty for my Faith.*] But if it should be reply'd: *Sr, an Arian or Socinian might do the same, and yet no by-stander be the wiser for it, or more able to discern which of you has Christs true Faith, which not; in regard that must be decided by shewing who has an Absolutely Certain Means to know the true Sense of the Letter*; the Drs insignificant Principles carry no farther, but (as we shall see anon) to confess plainly neither of them have *any* such Means of Absolute Certainty *at all*. And that he cannot *manifest* what was *expected* of him and he stood engag'd to *manifest*.

30. The case then between us being such plain sense, what says the Learned Dr to it? Why, besides his rare evasions lately mention'd, he tells the Reader vapouringly his *way of reasoning was too hot for Mr. G.* which I have shewn to be *frigid Nonsense*. He complains that our obliging him to prove or shew clearly what belong'd to him (for no body held him to *Mood and Figure*) is like the *Trammelling a Horse*. That we insinuate Mr. G. is *Now suited*, which is far from True. He is peevishly angry at the Metaphor of *Playing at Cards*, and persecutes it without Mercy; which is a scurvy sign that, however he pretended to a *Purse full of Gold and Silver*, he is a *Zofer*; and that he will be put to *borrow some Ci-*

- Ibid. *tations* out of Authors to combat the *Council of Trent*, hoping to recover by that means some of the Credit he has lost by the Nonplusage of his *Reason*. He pretends he gives us *good security*: that is, for the *Letter* of Scripture, which was not the End of the Conference, nor is our Question; but not the least security for its *Sense*, or *Faith*, which *was*. He talks of *Declamations* and the *Schools in the Savoy*; and glances at my pretending to *Intrinsick Grounds*; which is to maintain that Humane Authority (which is the only thing I was to prove) is to be believed *blindly*, whether a man sees any *Reason* why he ought to believe it, or no. He talks too of the *Cardinals in the Inquisition*; who, tho' my Just Judges, were my very good Friends. He says my Grounds had sav'd the *Martyrs Lives*, and he makes a rare Plea for them out of my Principles: Forgetting, good man, that we are writing *Controversy* to satisfy men who are *in their way to Faith*; whereas those Blessed Martyrs were not only *already Faithfull*, but moreover *liv'd up to Christ's Doctrin*; and, so, had Inward *Experience* in their Consciences of it's *Sanctity* and *Truth*. He imagines the *Jews* who *saw our Saviour's Miracles* had no *Intrinsick Grounds*. Whereas True Miracles being evidently *above Nature*, are known to be such by *comparing* them with the Course of *Natural Causes*, known by a kind of Practical Evidence or Experience: And must I be forc'd to render him so *Weak* as to instruct his Ignorance that the Knowledge of things in *Nature* is an *Intrinsick Ground*, and not *Extrinsick* as Testimony is? He sticks close to his Friend *Lominus*, right or wrong, in despite of all the Evident and Authentick Testimonies to the contrary; whom before (for want of others to second him) he split into *Two*, and now multiplies into the Lord knows how many. To gratifie his Friend Dr. *Tilloison*, and excuse *his*, and his *own* silence, he says I have *retracted the main Principles in Faith Vindicated and Reason against Railery*; which
- P. 18.
- Ibid. p. 18. 19
- P. 19.
- P. 20.

which, in plain terms, is an *Unexcusable Falshood*. To explicate two or three words, and shew by *Prefaces*, *States of the Question* and many *Signal* passages they were *Misunderstood* and apply'd to wrong Subjects, (as I did to the satisfaction of my Judges, and even of prejudic't persons) signifies plainly *not-to retract* them: Nor shall he name *any one* Learned and Orthodox man of our Church who says my *Explication* is not *Gennin* and *Sincere*; whereas I have nam'd him *many*, Eminent in *both* those Qualities, who have attested under their hands they *are* *such*. He ends with bidding the Reader judge *what* *J. S.* has gotten by the *Confession of Parties*. As much as in Modesty he could have wish't; as appears by the Approbations of his Books and Success in his Suit. What Dr. *St.* has got by the *Confession of his Party*, may be seen by an Eminent man, not writing in hugger-mugger and *Disguise*, but *owning his Name*, viz. that he ^{*} is accus'd of *having Mountebankt and Quackt for full five and twenty years*. And these *wretched shifts* he has thought fit to use here to avoid the Point, lets us see he has not left it yet. Nor am I to expect he should easily quit such an *Inveterate Habit*, grown into a kind of *Nature* by a five and twenty years *Custom* and *Practice*.

Ibid.

* Answer to
Mr. Lowth.
P. 17.

31. Now comes the State of the Question, as his Second Letter has craftily put it; tho' I conceive it was best Stated by shewing the *Occasion* and sole *End* of the Conference; to which I will hold, nor will I be beat off from it by any Excursions either *then* or *since*. There was a Question *then* put to Dr. *St.* in these words, *Whether you are absolutely Certain that you hold now the same Tenets in Faith, and all that our Saviour taught his Apostles*. I thought I did well in putting him to answer directly that, *He was*. He says by my favour he us'd other words. And what were those! Why, instead of the *same Tenets in Faith, and all that our Saviour taught to his Apostles*, he answer'd [*All*

P. 21.

the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.] There's a Cloud in this carriage of his, it being against the Clear way of honest Nature. Was the Position as it lay in the terms of the Proposer, *true* ; and, so, to be *granted* ? Why did he not *grant* it then ? Was it *False* ? why did he not *deny* it ? Was it *Ambiguous* ? why did he not, the Proposer being present, desire him to explain it ? No neither. None of these plain and common Methods would please him. What then ? He would needs *change* the words of the Question in his Answer. And by what Rule ? Was his Answer the *same* in *Sense* with the Question ? If not, his Answer was no Answer to that Question, but the saying *another thing* on his own head. If it was the *same Sense*, why did he not speak to it *directly* in the Proposers words ? The reason he gives is, because he's afraid of *Orall Tradition* lest it should *vary* the *Sense*. Whose *Sense* ? The Proposer's ? His Sense was fixt in determinate words, and if it were not known, the Doctor might have known it if he had pleas'd. He means then *his own Sense*. What ? must he put what Sense he thinks fit to the Question ? This is a quaint way of Answering. And why should not the Proposer fear, as himself did here, lest by changing his words, as he did enormously, he should change his Sense too ? But this Orall Tradition like a Spright so haunts his Fancy, that all along (as shall be seen) he either *starts* perpetually into Excursions and counterfeit Mirth, or *stumbles* into downright Nonsense. And this I believe verily is the *General* reason of all his failings : But we are now to seek out his *particular* reason of changing the words here. The last words that differ in the Question and Answer can break no squares, for *Christ* and his Apostles agreed well enough ; and that Heavenly Master of theirs taught them *All Faith* either by Himself or the Holy Ghost sent *in his name*. The danger then must be in these words [*the same Tenets in Faith*]
which

which he changes, for his security, into [*the same Doctrin.*] Because the word [*Doctrin*] signifies all *in the lump* (as * he expresses it) to shew which he hop't it might be sufficient to shew the Book of Scripture; whereas the Plural word [*Tenets*] might come to oblige him to shew *how* he has Absolute Certainty of *each* or *any* Point in particular, to which he has a great Antipathy. And, accordingly, when he came to perform this, he chang'd again the Absolute Certainty of Faith into Absolute Certainty of Scripture. I answer'd. They held *more* to be of Faith than that the *Book so call'd is Scripture*. He first trifles that we mean *more than is contain'd in Scripture*, contrary to our express words, where there's not a Syllable of *containing* or *not-containing* all Faith. However, *if I mean his assent to Points of Faith contain'd in Scripture*, he promises a *full Answer afterwards*: which we impatiently long to see. Only we intreat him, because 'tis a far off, he would not lose *Absolute Certainty* by the way; nor fool our expectations when we come at it, by letting the *full Answer* promise us, vanish away into a *flat denial* he has any *such* Certainty of those Points at all.

* Second Letter to Mr. G.
P. 17.

P. 21.

32. I argu'd *ad hominem* that, since he confesses *Tradition causes Certainty*, it makes Faith as Certain as Scripture: He seems to confess it; but denies *we have such an Universal Tradition for our Tridentin Faith*. As if the Faith come down by Tradition were not the same *before* and *since* that Council; or that the Tradition we build on did not consist of such a vast Body of Attesters as were able to evince the truth of a plain matter of Fact, unless those who had renounc't Tradition did club to it's Certainty. But is it not pretty to observe that he pretends not to hold Faith to be Certain by our Tradition because 'tis *not* Universal, and yet at the same time disputes against Tradition's being a Certain Deriver of *Christ's* Faith even *tho' it were* Universal! For, his Principles allow

P. 23.

low no more hand in our Faith to Universal Tradition, but only to bring down the *Book of Scripture*, and then make that Book the *only* Ascertainer of our Faith. He threatens to shew the Tridentin Council had not Universal Tradition for it's Decrees; and to give us a taste before-hand of that Treatise, he adds, *Let the matter of Tradition itself, as a Rule of Faith, be one of those Points.* Well shot Doctor! The Points he speaks of here are *express* to be Points of Faith; and the Tradition we defend in our Controversy at present is the *Human* Authority of the Church, which we make to be the Rule to those *coming to Faith*; and so it is *Antecedent* to Faith and the Object of pure *Natural Reason*: And does he in his Great Learning think *This* is a Point of Faith? Or is it not possible to keep this roving Pen of his to any thing? But he *designs* to prove this mighty *Advantage* of his Cause, and that no *Catholick Tradition* can be produc't against his Church in any one Point of the Additional Creed of Pius I V. Suppose it could not; has he therefore prov'd he has Absolute Certainty of the Faith he holds, in case we could not prove some other Points which we hold? Yet he has undertaken at all adventures this Great *Design*, and will suddenly publish the First Part; and, if God gives him Life and Health (he should have said, *Principles* too) he hopes to go thorough the rest. As much as to say, he *designs* to leave the Certainty of his Faith in the lurch, to tell the World publickly he has done so; and, if God gives him Life and Health, will continue to run away from that troublesome Point as far as ever he can. He should first have answer'd *Error Nonplust*, and clear'd himself from being a Man of no Principles, before he can be fit to impugn others; unless he thinks a man may dispute without Principles; as I verily believe he does; for his odd Methods of Reasoning and Answering need none.

he is, for all that, a *good man*; and desires no more to end our Controversies but to make Salvation our End, and the Scripture our Rule. But, if there be no Means to come at the Sense of Scripture in those most important Articles with Absolute Certainty, many may come (as Millions have done) to *Misunderstand* such places, and thence to embrace a *Grand Heresy* instead of the Chief Points of *True Faith*; and does he think Heretical Tenets in such concerning Points, is *saving Faith*. Let him shew that his Principles lay such Grounds as absolutely secure the Truth of Faith, e're he talks such *Pious* (or rather *Per-nicious*) Nonsense of a *saving Faith*. For, should it hap to be False (as by his Grounds it may) 'tis neither *Faith*, nor the *means to Salvation*. He pretends I exclude all from Salvation, who do not penetrate *Intrinsic Grounds*: But, 'tis a flim of his own coyning. *Error* P. 143. 144. *Nonplust* has long ago told him over and over, that 'tis enough they adhere to a Rule that is settled on *Solid* or *Intrinsic* Grounds, and so cannot deceive them, tho' they do not at all penetrate, or (as he calls it) *dig into the Intrinsic Grounds*, why that Authority or Rule is Inerrable. Let the Truth of Faith be secured, and they have what's simply requisite to Salvation; unless they be such persons as *speculate* or *doubt*, or are to *defend the Truth* of Faith against Hereticks, and thence come to need a deeper Inspection and Knowledge of the Reasons which conclude their Rule does absolutely secure the Reliers on it from Error. *Cateram quippe turbam* (as St. Austin says *Contra Ep. Fund.*) *non intelligendi vivacitas sed credendi simplicitas, tutissimam facit.* For as for the others which are the vulgar, they are render'd absolutely secure, or out of danger of Erring, not by the Sagacity of Understanding; but by the simplicity of Believing.

34. I know not certainly what pass at the Conference, about which he still keeps such a-do. 'Tis high time to leave

leave it off and follow our Point. Things should have been better manag'd to give us a clearer light ; for want of which we are forc'd to trust the Dr himself, tho' a party, and accept what he represents in his *Second Letter* to Mr G. Only I see it was confest on all hands that the *sole End* of it was that Dr. St. should manifest *he had Grounds of Absolute Certainty for his Faith* ; and to that I will stick, and Level my Discourses accordingly. The Dr is at his old shuffle again, of Scripture's Letter being certain and *containing* all ; neither of which are to any purpose, since neither of these reach his *Faith*, which is an Assent to *determinate Points*. I alledg'd that the *Certainty of Scripture was not the Point for which the Conference was*. He asks *how I know it* ? By the very words that express it, put down here and acknowledg'd by himself p. 15. But Mr G. *knew it not*. That's more than I know, or the Dr. either. It appears not what use he would have made of it after he had propos'd some Questions to gain light what the Drs. Principles were ; for the Dr. himself confesses Mr T. *cut off* his Discourse by *declaring himself satisfied*, and asking Questions of his own. But Mr. G. *lost the Point by asking Questions about the Rule*. Not so neither. For he was well acquainted with Common Sense, which told him the word [*Rule*] is a Relative word ; and, so, is to regulate us about the *particular Points* of Faith, which it relates to ; and that, unless it does this, 'tis good for nothing, being merely ordain'd for that End : which Dr. St. either *knows not*, or will not *seem* to know, lest he should come to be engag'd to shew how his pretended Rule influences *any one Point* with Absolute Certainty ; and yet, if it does not this, 'tis *no Ground for the Absolute Certainty* of his Tenets or *Faith*. He says that *by the Scripture they are to judge what they are to believe, what not*. By which we are to understand that he has shuffled away from shewing his

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his Rule to be a *Qualifying* Principle, which is to give his Faith *Absolute Certainty*, to the making it a *Quantitative Measure* shewing what's Faith what nor, or *how much* is of Faith. It seems *Quantity* and *Quality* is all one with him ; and he would be *Measuring* his Faith, before he knows he has *Any*. As for his *Containing* Faith so often shown to be an insignificant pretence, let him know that between his having the Letter of Scripture *Containing* all, and the *Doctrinal Points*, (which is truly his *Faith*) there intervenes a *Quality* in the Rule called *Clearness*, or *Plainness*; and such a one as is able to secure the Reliers on it that what they receive upon that Rule is not an *Error*, or a *Heresy*, which is *against Faith*. 'Tis *this* he is to make out, and prove that this *Clearness* is found in his Rule apply'd to *all* sincere seekers after Faith ; and, till he does this, 'tis a phrenzy to maintain those men can have *Absolute Certainty of Faith* by means of Scripture's Letter. Yet hold him close to this plain Point, and he'll complain he's *trammell'd*, he should say, *gravell'd*. But he says, he must not come near any *one* Point of his Faith, because being to *shew* he held *All the same Doctrin, &c.* the word [*All*] made it necessary to assign a Rule in which *All* is contain'd. Now I verily thought that *All* signify'd *Every one*, but his Discourse makes it signify *No one*: Again, how shall we know he holds the *Same Doctrin*, as he in his Answer pretended he did, without *particularizing* the Points held? By this Discourse the *Arians* and most of the *Hereticks* since Christs time held the *Same Doctrin* he taught ; for they all held the Scripture's Letter to be *Certain*, and that it contain'd their Faith ; yet tell him this a hundred times over, and demand *how* this is a *particular* Rule for his *Protestants*, which is a *Common* one to all *Hereticks*, he is still deaf on that ear. Lastly, since *Faith* is *Truth*, instead of a Rule containing *All*, he should have assign'd a Rule ascer-

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raining it *All to be True*, and that none of the Tenets he holds to be in Scripture are *Hereticall*. But he thanks you he'll not burn his fingers with handling such *hot Points*. He alledges that the *Mosaicall* and *Mahometan* Laws are resolv'd into the *Book of Moses* and the *Alcoran*. But apply this to our Point 'tis as wide from the purpose as what's most. Had there been such *High* and *most Important Mysteries* contain'd in those Laws as there are in the *Christian* Doctrin, deliver'd down and profess'd openly by those Bodies from which multitudes had taken the Liberty to recede by reason of the Obscurity of the *Letter* of those very Laws; in that case, there ought to have been some other *Rule* to secure them from mistaking that *Letter*, and able to give them its true *Sense*; and, therefore the Certainty of that *Sense* being their respective *Faiths*, would necessarily have been resolv'd into such a Rule, in regard the Letter alone could not give and ascertain it. And 'tis to be remark't, that all Dr S's Instances, Parallels and Similitudes which show prettily and look fine and glossy, when they come to be apply'd to the true Point, do still miss of being futable in those very particulars which are only to the purpose.

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35. And now we are come to the long expected performance of showing his Faith *Absolutely Certain*, to which he promis'd a full *Answer* formerly. He begins with telling us that *The case is not the same as to Particular Points of Faith with that of the General Grounds of the Certainty of Faith*. And what's this to say, but that since the *General Grounds* are held by him to be *Absolutely Certain* and so cannot be *False*, the *Particular Points of Faith*, (*viz.* the Trinity, Christ's Godhead, &c.) are not in the same but a worse case and so may be *False*. A fair, or rather a very foul Concession! Yet he not only says it, but will prove it too from a Jew's having *Absolute Certainty* of all contain'd in the *Books of Moses*, and yet not having it as to such

such a particular point, viz. the Resurrection. I would gladly know if that point be *contain'd* in those Books? And, if it be, how he can be *absolutely Certain* of *All*, (that is of *every Point*,) *contain'd there*, and yet not be *thus certain* of *That Point tho' contain'd there*. I ever thought that *Omnis* and *Aliquis non* had been Contradictories; and had all the Logicians in the world on my side in thinking so: and if the Dr. have not invented a new Scheme of Logick of his own, fitted purposely to maintain Nonsense, and can with his great Authority make that Logick good in despite of the whole World, he speaks Flat downright *Contradiction*. Perhaps he may mean his Jew (or some other man who is not a Jew,) may have Absolute Certainty that those Books containing all his Faith were writ by men divinely inspir'd. And this he may have by the Testimony for these Books, tho' he can neither *read*, nor *understand*, nor ever *heard* read any one word in them: And has not this Man an incomparable *Certainty* of his Faith, that knows *no Faith at all*? Is not this to make a man Absolutely Certain of *he knows not what*? Yet, this it seems is all the Resolution of Dr. *St's* Faith. But this is not the worst; for *not-knowing* the Contents of a Book, is a kind of *Innocence* in comparison of *holding* many wicked *Hereses* by *Misunderstanding* it. Which tho' he should do, (as do it he may, for the Drs Principles give him no security from doing it) his very *Hereses*, tho' they be all the whole rabble of them that have pester'd the Church since Christ's time are resolved into the *Self-same* Grounds, as the Drs Faith is: For, all those Hereticks believ'd the Scripture to be the *Word of God*, and believ'd all that the Scripture *contain'd* to be of Faith; whence they had all Faith *in the lump*, (as he expresses it) and so had good Title to be parts of Dr *St's* motley *all Comprehending* Church. If he denies it, let him show a solid reason by his Principles why they should not; no

shadow of which I could ever discern in him yet.

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36. He slides from this point, which he had no mind to come near could he have avoided it, to *divers sorts of particular Points*; meerly that he might have a show of saying something. For he knows well, and it has been told him above twenty times, we only speak of such Dogmatical Tenets as have been controverted between the Church and her Deserters: and, not to name *All*, we use to instance in two *Chief* ones, The Holy *Trinity* and the *Divinity of our Saviour*. But, here our rambling disputant is taking another vagary quite out of the road of the Question. *Lominus* has set him so agog that he has quite forgot the thing we are about, nay even that we are writing *Controversy*. He is turn'd *School-Divine* on a sudden, tho' he is so utterly Ignorant of it, that he cannot distinguish between *Controversy* and *It*. He will needs fall to treat of Faith as 'tis a *Theological Virtue*; and not only so, but moreover (that he may show us how manifoldly he can mistake in one Single Point) of that Virtue as 'tis in the hearts of those who are truly Faithfull already, and have besides, well cultivated their Souls by the Practice of Christ's Law. Whenas all this while, he knows we in our *Controversy* are only treating of Faith as 'tis *provable* to those who are looking after Faith, that 'tis Christ's Doctrine taught at first. Tell him of this five hundred times and make it out never so clearly, he runs counter still and takes no notice of it. He was to write a Book, and without mistaking willfully all along, he saw he could not do it in any degree plausibly. After many fruitless attempts to hold him to the true State of our Controversy, which is about the *Rule or Ground* of Faith *as to our knowledge*, it occur'd to me that nothing could fetter him to it more fast, than to mind him how his Friend *Dr. Tillotson*, whose Book he approves does himself *State* it. * [*When we en-*
quire

quire (says he) *What is the Rule of Christian Faith? the meaning of that Enquiry is, By what Way and Means the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrine is convey'd certainly down to us, who live at the distance of so many Ages from the time of it's first Delivery.* I intreat him then for Dr. T's sake, to remember that our Controversy *presupposes* Faith as 'tis Divine, and treats of it only as 'tis Derivable down to us at this distance; and, therefore, since the Knowledge of the Certain Means to do this, is, *in our Controversy*, antecedent to the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrine or Faith, it must be manag'd by Maxims of pure Reason.

* Rule of Faith. p. 5.

37. This Point then settled, let us trace our Prevaricator in his wandrings. He tells us very gravely *God is not wanting by his Grace to make (necessary) Points known to men of honest and sincere Minds.* What we demand of him is some *Natural Medium* or Argument within our ken, concluding that what's held by him now is Christ's Doctrine. He confesses he has *none* (for he mocks at *Conclusive Evidence*) but pretends *God's Grace* will do it for him. We tell him that, without such Conclusive Reasons to prove our present Faith to have been taught by Christ, we cannot maintain or make out that our Faith is True. And he tells us *God is not wanting by his Grace to make necessary Points known to Men of honest and sincere minds.* And what man living has the Courage to assault an Adversary that comes Arm'd with such a *Supernatural Logick*! Now all this, were it levell'd right, as 'tis not, is meer *Petition Principii*; and, begging the Question; for it *supposes* Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments is the Rule, which he was here to prove, and to shew us how it preserves those who rely on it from Error. For, otherwise, if it be not the Rule, did God ever promise his Grace to those who leave a Clear and Conclusive way to follow an Obscure and Inconclusive one? Did God's Grace ever make a Conclusion follow which did not follow,

or

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or make the Terms *cohere* which were *Incoherent*? Or keep those from *Error* who took a Way, that, for any thing he has *prov'd* to the contrary, facilitated men to fall into it? Certainly, never was God's Grace so abus'd to a wrong end, or call'd-in at a dead lift like some *Dens i machinâ* to save his Credit for bringing never an Argument that is worth a Rush. Yet, 'tis pleasant to see what a clutter he keeps about the *Donum Intellectus* and *Lumen Fidei*, both which presuppose *Faith* and the *Way* to it, whereas all his work was to *prove* the Certainty of this *Liter*. In this lamentable condition he has left his Rule, recurring to *Invisible Gifts* (the true blew Fanatick Method) instead of producing *open* Arguments to *prove* it has any power to regulate men in their *way* to Faith. Proceeding upon this gross and wilfull shuffle he makes a fine flourish of our *School-Divines* who have not one single word of the *way and Means by which the knowledge of Christ's Doctrin is convey'd down to us*, which is our present Point, as his Friend * Dr. T. has told him: And then he concludes like a Triumphant *Heroe* that I am a *Stranger to the Doctrin of our own Church, or an obstinate Opposer of it*. Alas for him! He *obstinately opposes*, while he cites them, the known *State of the Question*; and is such a *Stranger to School-Divinity* that he cannot distinguish betwixt *That* and *Controversy*; and when he is taken tardy thus miserably, he thinks to salve all with *Swaggering and Vapouring*.

* Rule of Faith, p. 6.

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38. At length he sums up his Performances with impertinent distinctions of all the things he is Certain of. As, 1. *That he is Absolutely Certain that whatever God reveals is True*. Who denies it; or what's the Certainty of God's revealing to the Certainty of his believing right, unless he be absolutely Certain that the particular Points he holds, were *indeed reveal'd by God*, or (to speak more pertinently to our purpose) *were taught by Christ and his Apostles*?

Apostles? 2. He is Absolutely Certain of *his Rule*, and it's containing all necessary points. And what's he the better for Certainty of *This*, if still he remains uncertain of *all* the particular Articles he is to believe by it? 3. That God's Grace is requisite to *Faith* formally *Divine*; which is granted: but what's this to the *proving* it by a Natural Medium to have come from *Christ*, as he must do to those who are in the *Way* to Faith? Conclusive Evidence must be produc't for this, or the Proof must fall short of *concluding* (whether we have *Grace* or no) and so leave it *Unprov'd* and *Uncertain*. 4. He says, *Particular Points of Faith* are *more or less* Certain, according to the Evidence of their Deduction from Scripture as the Rule of Faith. This only seems to touch the Point in hand, and it touches it very gingerly. Let him speak out and tell us whether he is *Absolutely Certain* of all particulars of his Faith, nay even of a Trinity and *Christ's* Godhead by *his Rule*; or whether *any man living* is absolutely Certain of them by *his Principles*? If not, then all Faith may be a Lying Story for any thing he or any man else can tell. And that this is his true Tenet is evident by his omitting * here when he comes to speak of Particular Points, the words P. 33. l. 12.
& 16. [*Absolutely Certain*] which he put to the two first parts of his Division. Nor do I like his expression of [*more or less* Certain] for since any Quality is *more or less* such, by having *less* or *more* of the Opposit Quality mixt with it, it follows that this his [*more or less* Certain] must mean [*less* or *more* *Uncertain*] strange Language for a Christian to use when he is speaking of *All the Particular Articles of his Faith*, and what Certainty is to be allow'd for them! And yet he calls this, the *setting this Controversy about the Certainty of Faith in it's true light*. A pleasanter Jest than which was never spoke, were not the thing in it self so pernicious. Ibrl.

S E C T III.

*How Dr. St. Answers Our Reasons produc't against his
Grounds of Certainty for his Faith.*

39. **H**E proceeds next to answer my *short Discourse* demonstrating that He, and those of His Principles, could not be *Sure* they had right Faith. I presum'd he *could not do it*; he says he *has*: Let's see which of us is disappointed. It consists of five plain Propositions. 1. *God has left us some Way to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught.* 2. *Therefore this Way must be such that they who take it, shall arrive by it at the End it was intended for; that is know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught.* 3. *Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not that Way; for we experience Presbyterians and Socinians (for example) both take that Way, yet differ in such high Fundamentals, as the Trinity & Godhead of Christ.* 4. *Therefore Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not the Way left by God to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or surely to arrive at right Faith.* 5. *Therefore they who take only That Way, cannot by it arrive surely at right Faith; since 'tis impossible to arrive at the End, without the Means or Way that leads to it.* The Reader may know that this very Discourse, in substance, was propos'd to him many years ago by a Worthy Lady, of whose sincerity I believe himself does not doubt. He made a rambling Discourse of his own against it, unaplicable to any Proposition in it. The Lady, having a high opinion of Dr. St.'s parts, judg'd it impossible a man of his Learning should not be able to give an Answer to a few Lines in so long a time; not reflecting how connected Truth hampers an Adversary, and is perfectly

Unanswerable:

Unanswerable: So she prest vehemently for a Second & a Distinct Answer. After some tedious expectation he sends another, more insignificant, if possible, than the former. Which seen, and the Lady now satisfied that he (upon whom she most rely'd) had done his utmost, she alter'd her Judgment; upon no other inducement than the seeing plainly that his Principles resolv'd all Certainty of Faith finally into the Private Spirit: The Drs *Reflector* was set on, like an unexperienc'd *Perdu* Souldier, to combat it with a *distinct* Answer: but alas! he was shown to falter or falsify in every particular. This ill success, made the Dr. grow wary in speaking to any *particular* part of it; but thought it safest here to stand aloof, and throw stones *at distance*, instead of grappling with it *neerer hand*. His answer is, that it proceeds upon two *False Suppositions*, and *Overthrows the Possibility of any Rule of Faith*. My first False Supposition is, *that there is no Certainty without Infallibility*. No *True* or *Absolute Certainty*, good Dr. For, as for *your* Morall Certainty it may be *Fallible* enough. I must confess I hate such nonsense as to say [*I am perfectly Certain of a thing yet peradventure I am deciev'd.*] The word [*Absolute*] signifies *Perfect*; and *Certainty*, if *True*, is taken from the *Natures of the Objects or Things without us*; and if they stand *perfectly* engag'd by a *True Knowledge* of them, they would *not be* what they *are*, if, when we truly conceive them *as they are*, our Conception or *Judgment* of them *can be False*, that is, if it be not, in that particular, *Infallible*. This is plain Sense, and told him long ago. It has been demonstrated also in ** Faith Vindicated* that *True Certainty & Infallibility* were all one. What answers he? Why, he makes as if he had never known or heard of our Arguments for it; but falls to talk of the ** Stoicks Marke, Epicurus* his fooleries: He learnedly mistakes the Definition, [*Man is a Rational Creature*] for a *Demonstration*, and dislikes it at the same time.

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time. Lastly, he tells us many other things the Antients held or said; which are nothing to me, who judge I know what belongs to *Certainty* and *resolving of Truths* into their *Principles*, as well as they did; and do think them very weak to stand disputing with the perfect Scepticks or convincing them by *Criteria*s; because all Discourse supposes something *Certain* to build upon, otherwise it might go on *endlessly*; that is, would be *to no End*; and the Scepticks admitted no *Certainty* of any thing at all.

40. His Application of those Preparatives is, that we are to expect *no* Absolute *Certainty* in proving the present Faith to be Christ's Doctrin. And so he hopes to save his own Credit for producing *none*, let the Credit of Christian Faith, and the repute of its being an *Absolutely Certain Truth* go where it will for him. However, to avoid the shame justly due to such a Position, he must cast in some good words to fool his Readers; and, so, he grants that they who use due *Care and diligence* may attain to a true *Certainty and satisfaction of Mind* as to the sense of Scripture. But he never attempts to show that possibly they may not do so, but may hap to fall into damnable Heresies as the *Socinians* do; who, for ought he or I know, us'd as much *Care and Diligence*, as he and his Party use. Again, what means *Satisfaction of Mind*? Is Faith ever a jot more *Certain* or *True* because some may be *satisfy'd* it is? Are not the *Socinians* as well *satisfy'd in mind* that *Christ is not God*, as the Dr. is that he *is God*? Moreover; if the Argument he brings to prove his Faith to be Christ's true Doctrin, does not conclude, 'tis a thousand to one that Acute and Intelligent men will find the flaw in it; And what can those men do in that case, so they be true to their Reason, the only Light they can yet guide themselves by? Must they *Assent* that his Faith came from Christ, when they see that, notwithstanding
all

all the Proof he brings for it, it may *not be Christ's*, and *hazard* to Embrace that Doctrin for *his Faith* which may, for any thing they know, have the *Father of Lyes* for its Author? They must *Suspend* then in that case, and justify themselves by alledging that the *best* Arguments, the most Learned Christians bring to *prove* it, *conclude* nothing; Nay 'tis to be fear'd they will disgrace the Faithfull as a company of Fops, for believing upon weak Grounds; and, by showing them such, lay a just Scandall upon the Christian Church for pretending to hold what Christ taught, when as yet *none in it* are able to *prove* it *was* his Doctrin. And how would they laugh Christians out of Countenance, if, proceeding on Dr St's *short* Grounds, they should only show them a Well-Attested Book *containing* those Doctrines, without ascertaining absolutely the true *Sense* of it, when as only that *Sense* was the Doctrin of Faith; and, which is worse, when they saw multitudes of numerous Sects at perpetual and irreconcilable variance about that *Sense*! The true *Rule of Faith* then must be such as sets Faith above any *Peradventure* of not being Christ's true Doctrin, and so, secure all who rely on it, how weak soever, from being *deceiv'd* or in an *Error*; and, withall, it must be such as Intelligent men, seeking for assurance of Christ's Faith, may be satisfy'd it is able to *conclude* it to be such, and the more Learned Faithfull *Evince* to Doubters and *Convince* Opposers, that the Faith *held now* by themselves and the Church is the *Self-same* that Christ and his Apostles taught *at First*. But Dr St. dares not affirm any of this of *his* Rule of Faith; therefore his pretended Rule is *none*. His Instance of True Certainty attainable *without Infallibility* in that point of Faith, *viz. That Jesus was the True Messias*, is partly answer'd in my *Fourth Catholique Letter*; and his alledging it has one strange inadvertence in it, which I wonder he was not aware of, which

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Fourth
Cath. Letter!
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is, that the Proof of it depended on the Interpretation of Scripture. He had it seems forgot that to manifest himself to be the true *Messias*, foretold by the Prophets, was the main Point of our Saviours Doctrin; and that he did Miracles to attest that Doctrin, and make himself known to be that Person; which Miracles were *Infallible* Marks that that Doctrin of his in that point was *True*. And, when the Dr. produces *Miracles* to abet his Private Interpretations of Scripture, then he may have a fair pretence to lay aside the Publick Interpretation of the Church. Again, he is quite out as to the Subject of his discourse: For tho' it was a *Point of Faith* in the Jewish Law that a *Messias* was to come; yet that this very Person, *Jesus Christ*, was to be that *Messias*, was no *Point of Faith* among them; and God's Providence, we see, took a far better way to make it out than *Private Interpretations* of the Scripture; unless he thinks *Miracles*, no more Effectual nor more Certain than private Interpretations are. What insignificant nothings this Man brings for his choice Arguments, and what pains he takes in the worst cause in the world, viz. To maintain that Christian Faith needs not to be Absolutely Certain? And this, for no other reason (for 'tis every Christian's Interest it should be so) but because his bad Principles can afford him no Argument to prove it to be such.

P. 37. 41. His Pretence of my *Second False Supposition*, (viz. that a *Rule of Faith*, according to me must be a *Mechanical Rule*, and not a *Rational*) is weak beyond expression. Every Schollar knows (his Friend Dr. T. particularly who took the same way and us'd the same expressions, *Rule of Faith*. p. 4.) that Metaphors are translated from *Materiall* to *Intellectual* things, in regard we have no *Genuine Conceptions* of these Later; (and indeed, most of the Language of Christianity is made up of such expressions,) whence we can argue, by Analogy, from the one to the other. The word [*Rule*] is one of those Metaphoricall words:

words: and, hence we say that, as a *Material Rule* is that by which if we draw our Pen, it directs us to make a *Right Line*; so, the *Rule of Faith*, being intended by God to direct us to *Truth*, will lead those *Right* who follow it and regulate themselves by it. Does not this Metaphor look a little more Proper, and the Discourse upon it hang better together than his likening Scripture to a *Purse*? yet he utterly dislikes it, and tells the Reader *I falsely suppose the Rule of Faith must be a Mechanicall or Carpenters Rule with all its Dimensions fixt*; and denies that himself *supposes* it to be such a *Materiall* or *Mechanicall Rule*: Nor any man sure that were not stark Mad. Again, do we here meddle with its *Dimensions* or *how much* is of Faith, as he did when he spoke of *his Rule*? The *Straightness* of the draught, preserving us from the *Obliquity* of Errour, is the only point we aim at. Next, he denies there is *any such Intellectuall Rule*, because *there may be Mistakes in the Understanding and Applying it, and therefore Care and Diligence and Impartiality are requir'd, else men may miss*. How? *Mistho' they follow it*? Then it self was not *Straight*; and, so, *no Rule*: For the very notion of a Rule is to be a Thing that has a *Power* to regulate or direct us *right*, or keep the *Understanding* that follows it from *missing*; and to follow it is all the *Application* it can need to do its Effect. Whence, all the *Care* and *Diligence* and *Impartiality* he speaks of, must be employ'd in seeing they do indeed follow it: for none of these can help or hinder the Rule in its Power of directing; since it had *this* of it *Self*, independently of the *Persons*. But *his Rule*, tho' all these (as far as we Mortalls can discern) be us'd by the *Socinians* in the following it, still suffers those *Carefull*, and *Diligent* and *Impartiall* followers of it to err in Faith; Therefore 'tis *no Rule of Faith*. But 'tis mighty pretty to observe that when he is pinch't with plain Sense he ever and anon runs to the old

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P. 37. old Philosophers; who he says, *would have laugh'd at me for applying a Materiall Rule to Intellectuall things*. Sure he's not well awake. I draw a Metaphor indeed from a *Materiall Rule* to an *Intellectuall one*, and then apply that *Intellectuall Rule* to *Intellectuall things*; but I know none so mad as to apply a *Materiall Rule* to *Intellectuall things*; unless he thinks I am measuring *Faith* by a *Taylors Tard*, or finding out the right *Sense* of Scripture by a *Ruler* and a *Ruling pen*.

P. 38. 42. But, why *Presbyterians and Socinians*? This insinuation (says he) *has as much folly as Malice in it*, and makes as tho' *all* of the Church of England were *Socinians* in those points, viz. *The Trinity and Godhead of Christ*. God forbid I should be so injurious to them. I do assure him and them faithfully I intended it as a piece of Justice to them; and put in *Presbyterians* instead of *Protestants* because I had reason to hope those private-spirited Principles were none of *theirs*, and that divers of their Eminent Writers had own'd the Universall Tradition and Practice of the Church for their Rule of interpreting Scripture: And I have some Ground to think they might in time have profess'd it publickly, had not Dr. *Sr's Irenicum-Doctrines* * *fill'd that Church with men of no steady Principles*—and made *lukewarm Persons* flock into it—*corrupting it's Body*,—by which means there have been in the Church of England so few Church-of-England Men. But, why so Cholerick? Why such wincing and kicking? I do assure him I did not think I had in the least touch'd him. If he be so over-apprehensive and angry withal, I fear he has done himself more wrong in taking it to himself than I ever intended him. Again, what means he by [*all* of the Church of England?] I am told by a hearty Member of it, and one who owns his Name too, (how true it is let the Dr's Conscience look to it) that * *he is contented to sit and sing in the bearing Branches* of that Church, *so long*

* Answer to
a Letter a-
gainst Mr.
Lowth. p. 6.

* Answer to
Mr. Lowth's
Letter to
Dr. St. p. 13.

as he fills his Pockets; but, when the gathering time is over, it is to be cut down as that which cumbereth the Ground. By which he sees that he must either clear himself by a candid and full Retraction of his ill Principles, or he will have no Title to the word [Mer.] But we are come forwards to his farther Defence of his Rule, or rather to his overthrowing the *Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith*; in order to which he asks, *How can Reason be Certain in any thing, if men following their Reason can mistake?* Very easily. Because Reason is a Faculty or a Power, apt to be actuated by True or False Principles; and, accordingly, 'tis Determinable to Truth or Falshood. But, if Reason follow any Maxim, taking it to be a Principle to such a thing, and yet errs in that thing, then that pretended Principle is no true Principle. Yet, says he, *Men following the Rules of Arithmetick may mistake in casting up a Summ.* And can he seriously think that a man who casts it up False, does not decline, while he thus mistakes, from Arithmetical Rules? May he not with as good Sense say that Two and Three do not make Five? for all Rules of Computation hang together by the same necessity. In a word, his Instance falters in the Third Proposition, viz. That *Two who have made use of the same way differ at least a hundred in casting up the Sum.* Which is False; and by altering the Terms irregularly, he hinders any Conclusion from following. False, because, no two men can differ in a Sum, unless they wrong or abuse the Rules of Computation. Irregular; because, instead of the words [*who take that Way*] found in his Second Proposition and in our Discourse, he cogs in the words [*make use of that way*] which are not so express in fence as the word [*Take*] is, which imports following whither it leads, or making a right use of it. And it would have been too palpably absurd to say a man takes a way who leaves it; as an *Ill-reckoner* must needs leave the true Rules of Arithmetick. But those

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Ibid.

those who both *Take* and *Fallow* all along the Letter of Scripture interpreted by their private selves, and this to *their power*, and are skilfull in Languages & in *comparing* places, do yet go wrong; therefore *his Way* is *no Way*, and *his Rule* is *no Rule*. Then follows the Triumph over my *Inconsiderateness* in not distinguishing between the *Rule* and its *Application*; and I tell him the *taking* it, *following* it, or *holding to it*, is the *Applying* it, and *all* the Application it can need. Nor shall all his starting holes and tricks ever be able to evade the force of this Argument.

T. 40.

43. His Discourse of *Moral Qualifications* requisit to the *Certainty of Faith*, as to know the Sense of the *New Testament*, if apply'd to our present Question, amounts to this; that no man can see the force of a *Natural Medium* leading to *Faith*, without *Humility of Mind*, *Purity of Heart*, *Prayer to God*, *sincere Endeavours to do God's Will*, &c. So that for want of a good Argument, he has left off *Disputing*, and falls to *Preaching*, tho' he has had but ill Success in his *Guildhall Sermon*. 'Tis granted all these are excellent means to purge the Will from By-*affections*; and, by doing so, to leave the Understanding free to *see* the force of the *Proof*, and thence *inferr* the *Truth* of what's *prov'd* or shewn to our Reason. But where's this *Proof*, where's this *Truth* all the while? Must we produce such *invisible* things for *open* Proofs? If all these *Moral Qualifications* be *requisit* (as he says) to make men *Certain of Christ's Doctrin*, he must prove that Himself and all his Sober Enquirers, which are the Members of his private-Spirited Church, have all these *Qualifications*, e're we or any man living can be certain they have true Faith. Again, how will he *satisfy* Doubters, and *convince* acute Opposers and Adversaries what is the true Doctrin of *Christ*? Will the alledging *Invisible Qualifications* do the work? Moreover, he is *Certain* of his Faith by his Rule; and yet his Rule of *Scripture* ascer-
tains

tains none by his Doctrin but by vertue of these *Moral Qualifications*. These then are either his Rule or the best part of it. At least he maintains here they are *requisite*, and that otherwise Scripture is no Rule. He must then prove He has these Qualifications, or he cannot *shew* he has any Rule, or any Faith. In a word, we are disputing as Controvertists, and demand *open & intelligible* Proofs; and he sends us to *Invisible holes*, which only God the searcher of Hearts can find out; and is not this *mighty Learned*? I wonder how he can pretend to Convert any man to *Christ's* true Doctrin by these Principles. All he can do is to alledge and compare Texts to prove it *certainly Christ's* Doctrin; I but, Sir, says the other, how shall I be satisfy'd you have *Humility of Mind, Purity of Heart, &c.* without which your self confess you cannot be certain of the true Sense of Scripture at all? What Art the Doctor has to satisfy him in this hard Point I know not. But setting the Doctor's Faith aside, what Provision has he made for the standing Visible Body of the Church to *defend* and *maintain* she has *Christ's* true Faith? None in the world by his Principles, unless she can prove she has all these *Moral Qualifications*. So that all is left to each private man's breast; and, if he has but this *good Conceit* of himself, that he is endow'd with all those excellent Virtues, and *fancies* that he prays better than all his Neighbours, let them be *Socinians, Quakers* or what you will, he is *certain* of his Faith meerly by vertue of this Self-conceit that he is such a *Saint*; since by Dr. S's Principles without firm assurance that he is thus *requisitely qualify'd*, he can never have any assurance at all of his Faith. Might he not as well have told us in one word, that Himself and all his Friends are *pure Saints*, and *know* themselves to be so, and therefore they are Certain they have these rare *Qualifications*, and by them Assurance of the *Sense* of Scripture, or *Christ's* Doctrin; but

that all who do not think as they do, *want* those *Qualifications*, are of the *Wicked* and Children of *Darkness*, and so can never have any Light to know whether they have *Christ's* true Doctrin or not? This then is the rare Resolution of Dr. *St's* Faith. I expected he should produce *clear Arguments* as became a *Controvertist*, and he alledges the most *hidden Means* in the world as becomes an *Enthusiast*.

P. 14.

44. Yet the force of Truth is so great that it obliges him to confess that *The Right Way* will certainly bring men to their *Journeys End* if they continue in it. I subsume; But the Letter of Scripture Interpretable by Private Judgments does not bring the *Socinians* to their End, that is, to know surely what *Christ* and his *Apostles* taught, tho' they continue in it; whence I conclude that Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments is not the Right Way to know surely what *Christ* & his *Apostles* taught. To escape this most evident Conclusion which utterly overthrows his whole Cause, he starts aside with one [*If*] to the remote End [*Salvation*] whereas the End I spoke of in my Discourse which he is now answering, was expressly, to know assuredly *Christ's Doctrin*: Then after a second [*If*] he tells us *Scripture* was not design'd as an *Infalible Way* to know the Truth or Falshood of particular *Opinions* by. What have we to do with *Opinions*? We speak of *Points of Faith*, and instanc't expressly in the Blessed *Trinity* and the *Godhead of Christ*. Are these with him but *Opinions*? Indeed, I have reason to doubt that all *Points of Faith* are but *Opinions* with him, nay he ought to doubt they are or may be worse than *Opinions*, viz. Heretical Falshoods, unless he thinks himself absolutely Certain of his *Moral Qualifications*; for 'tis those, it seems, must do the deed, when all Arguments fail. As for *Infallibility*, there was no such word in my Discourse, and he ought to answer my Argument

Ibid. l. 20. 21.

ment in the words I put it; and not to start into such Evasions and Logomachies. Tho' the allowing of *Natural* Infallibility has been prov'd against him by Reason and Authority of those even of *his own Church*, he never answers it, but barely says over again, *there is no such thing as Infallibility in Mankind but by Immediate Divine Assistance*. Yet he had the boldness or Forgetfulness to say, p. 5. that *If this be not Catholick Doctrine, then I am Infallibly Certain J. S's Letters are far from being Catholick in their sense*. It seems than either some men are *Infallible*, for seriously I take Dr St. to be a Man; or he fancies himself to be something above the Herd of Mankind; or else sticks not at the Blasphemy to entitle the Blessed Spirit of Peace to have inspir'd him with such a quarrelsome *Falshood*.

45. He discourages against Tradition as 'tis *Practical*; but has he said any thing against it as 'tis *Oral*? the force of which to clear Christ's Sense delivered down in the Church consists in *Catechizing, Preaching, dilating* upon the Points, and *explicating* themselves at large; *replying* to difficulties, and *accommodating* their Discourse to all the Learners Exigences; All which is found in the Living Voice of the Church and her Pastours, (as * I shew'd him at large) and none of it, in the *Letter* in a *Book*. What answers he to common Sense and to his own Experience too when he instructs others? why he puts us off still with this frigid Cuckoo Answer, that *he is of another Opinion*, that writing is as plain as speaking; and that *words written have as much* (he ought to have said *as Clear*) *Sense in them as words spoken*. Which, apply'd to our case is most palpable Nonsense, and makes all *Explications frivolous*, and all *Catechizers and Commentators upon Scripture ridiculous*. The force I put in the *Practicalness* of Tradition is, that, super-vening to the *Oral* delivery, or being *consonant* to it, it

P. 42.

* Third
Cath. Letter,
p. 6. 7. 8.

* Third
Cath. Letter.
from p. 6, to
p. 12.

confirms it, and makes it *more Visible*. But he Combats the *Practicalness* of it consider'd alone; and so impugns his own willfull Mistake. But what says he to my discourse? He alledg'd that Tradition might come down in Common Equivocal Words, and so deliver *no determinate Sense*. I *reply'd that 'tis inconsistent with the Nature of Mankind to mean *nothing* by the words they use, especially in Tenets they were to be *say'd by*; therefore the Body of the Church had *some* Meaning or *other* of those Words, [*Christ is the Son of God,*] and [*Christ's Body is really in the Sacrament:*] But this Meaning or Notion could not be a *Common* or *General* one, in regard, no Notion can be common to *God* & a *Creature*, to the *Substance of Christ's Body*, & to the *Substance of Bread*, much less to that Sacred *Substance*, and some *Accidents* or *Qualities*: Therefore there could not come down any such *Common* Notion, by means of those *Words*; wherefore, there *must* have descended some *particular* Notion of each Point, determining the signification of the Words to *one* sense or the *other*. This was the true force of my Discourse. I do still pretend it *Demonstrable*, and let him answer it when he can; for, did he know the Consequences it will draw after it, he would think it worth his while. He's at his old Logick again, which is to bring an *Instance* against the *Conclusion*, and is very brisk that it overthrows my Demonstration. And what says his Instance? It says the *Corinthians* and *Artemonites* understood by those words, *that Christ was only an Adoptive Son*, that is a *Creature*; which is as much as to say, they understood them in a *Particular* Sense, which is all I *there* pretended. And, so, his *Instance* is, as he says truly, *Unlucky*; but 'tis to *himself*, not to *me*; for it *makes good* my words, and instead of *overthrowing*, *confirms* my Discourse that Men must have understood some *Particular* Sense by those words; and our *Learued Dr* is so weak

as to think, that, when what he brings for an Answer is so evidently *for me*, it makes *against* me. As for their *pleading Tradition for their Sense*; surely he means a *private* Tradition from some former *Hereticks*, and not the *Publick* Tradition of the *Christian Church*; or that their *Heretical* Tenets were *immediately deliver'd* by that United Body of Christians; for the manifest Falshood of this would have been confuted by Experience and have sham'd the Alledgers: Nor could the Church, in that case, have condemn'd them, since they spoke her sense. But the good Dr *mistook* the *Pretence* of two or three quibbling Hereticks for the *Universal Tradition* of the Church (as wicked an Error as it was possibly to stumble upon) & then triumphs how rarely his *Instance* has answer'd my *Demonstration*.

Ibid.

And thus ends his Reply to my *short Discourse*; which having done, he assures the Reader he has *fully answer'd* my *main Argument* against his Rule of Faith. Whereas he has not so much as *touch't* any *single* Proposition in it; & *trifled*, or done *worse*, even in the ridiculous odd way he has taken to answer it. Which confirms me more then ever 'tis past his skill to *hurt* it, and even beyond his Courage to *grapple with* it.

P. 47.

46. His contradicting himself is still urg'd upon him unless he can shew that true or Absolute Certainty does not secure those who have it in any thing, from being *deceived* in that thing. Again, in his 15th Principle he said *there needed no Infallible Society of men either to attest or explain the Scripture*. I reply'd, that if it be *Fallible*, we cannot by it be more than *Fallibly Certain*, and we can have no *Absolute Certainty* from a *Fallible Testimony*. This seems very plain; for how should a man be *absolutely* or *perfectly Certain* of a thing by *that very Testimony* which not being *perfectly Certain* may perhaps deceive him in *that very Thing*? His first Answer is, that [he

understands

P. 48.

P. 49.

understands no such thing as Infallibility in Mankind, but by immediate Divine Assistance.] He understands? Is that an Answer? Does he understand how to answer our many Arguments to prove it? By his not taking notice of them, we are to *understand*, and *conclude* he *does* not. Again he declares that in that Principle of his he meant there needed no *Infallibility by Divine Assistance*; and he utterly denies *Natural* Infalibility; whence 'tis manifest he allows no Certainty at all but *Fallibility*. His Faith is in a fine case in the mean time. He must shew I say that *Fallibility* in the Testimony can ground *Absolute Certainty* of the thing attested, and this, tho' a man *sees* that the Testimony and himself who relies on it may be in an *Error*, before he can make either the Letter or the Book of Scripture, *Absolutely Certain*, by Tradition or *Human* Testimony, which he maintains here is *Fallible*. Can a man think or say interiously, [*I am Absolutely (or perfectly) Certain of a thing* peradventure. When that very [*Peradventure*] hinders his Certainty from being *Absolute* or *Perfect*? What answers he to this plain Evidence? Or how shews he that a *seen* Fallibility is able to beget *Absolute Certainty*? Why, First, he says, *If by Fallible Certainty I mean this and that, &c. I mean?* Why I mean *nothing* by it but that 'tis a wicked *Contradiction*. I mean the same by it as I would by a *hirco-cervus*, a *four-squar'd Triangle*, *Green Scarlet*, or whatever such desperate words one may put together to compound strong Nonsense. How should I mean any thing by a *Compound* of two such words which the Goodness of Rational Nature, and the aversion which our understanding power has to *Contradiction*, has forbid any man to use ever since the Creation? Did the Dr. or any man living hear any Mortal man when he is about to express his Certainty of a thing, say [*I am Fallibly Certain of it?*] Yet, how oft has he heard them say, *I am Infalli-*
 bly

Ibid.

Not Certain of such a thing? whence were the word [*Infallibly*] a different Notion from *Certain*, or *Difference* added to it as to its *Genus*, it would nay must admit the Opposite Difference [*Fallibly*] as is done in all such cases: which since it does not, without straining nature, and the Language of Mankind, 'tis not a different Notion, but the same with *True Certainty*; and therefore in proper Speech *True Certainty* and *Infallibility* are both one: Yet, after he has thus abus'd the Language of all Mankind, he has the Confidence to tell me *I make use of those words in an Improper and unusual Sense*. This farther appears by this, that our Speculators use to add *Moral* or some other such Epithet to it, which are of a *diminishing* signification, when they would express it's deficiency from *True Certainty*. This Logical Demonstration to prove *Certainty* and *Infallibility* to be the same was all'dg'd in *Faith Vindicated*, p. 37. But we must excuse such slight Talkers from even attempting to give an Answer becoming a Scholar to any such *close Proofs*; tho' it has been prest upon him in *Erreur Ponplu*, p. 92. and upon Dr *Tillotson* in *Reason against Rallery* P. 42. 50. from p. 64. to p. 67. He only tells us what he *does own*, does *not own*, and such sleeveless sayings; that is, he only says over again his own crude Tenets with the formality of a Distinction or two; and places his main hopes to uphold his Credit, not in the *Strength* of his *Answers*, but in the *Weakness* or *Partiality* of his *Readers*. The upshot is, he owns clearly he has only *Fallible Grounds* for his Faith having been taught by *Christ*; which is to assert and maintain (for it is not to be suppos'd he will allow any others to have surer Grounds than his own) that *All Christian Faith may be False*, and the *Grounds* themselves, in more Regards than one, most perfect Nonsense.

47. He proceeds next to give us his Notion of *Absolute Certainty* in these words: [*When the Evidence is the highest*

highest which in point of Reason the thing is capable of, then there is that which I call *Absolute Certainty*. These words [*Which I call*] are very Emphatical, and precisely True; for no man living but himself and Dr. T. that I know of ever call'd it so. For, suppose the Evidence be but very slight, and the Thing, as propos'd to us, or in our Circumstances, can give us no more, will this *slight glimmering Evidence* make us *Absolutely Certain* of it? Again, Does he mean *in point of True Reason* inform'd by the best Maxims to direct and establish it? This is *Conclusive Evidence* or *Demonstration*, and the Conclusion thus deduc'd is *Infallibly True*, because the Maxim which legitimates the Consequence, is, as all Logicians know, *Infallibly Certain*, being a *Principle of our Understanding*, and *Self-evident*; Is it this he means? No: He does not like *Conclusive Evidence* in the Grounds of his Faith by no means. To come closer, I ask him, Does he mean that *True Knowledge*, conformable to the Thing, or object, fixes him in that Certainty, or (in great part) his own airy Apprehension? If such a *Knowledge*, then, since none can truly know what is not, that Knowledge is as Impossible to be False, or is as *Infallibly True*, as 'tis that *the thing must be what it is*: And, if no such Knowledge grounds his Certainty, how is it an *Absolute* or *Perfect* one? Can his apprehending it so make it so? Can a man be *Absolutely Certain* of a *Falseness*, because he apprehends that Falseness to be a Truth, or that a thing is so when 'tis not so? If not, then 'tis only it's *being so* which can be the Ground of *Absolute Certainty*, and *justify that Assent*, and then that Assent is *Infallible*, for a thing is *Infallibly what it is*. He'll say he took it to be so, and that's enough. But, to omit that his taking a thing to be so neither makes nor proves it to be so, I press farther: When he took it to be so, Did he take it right, or did he mistake it? If he took it right, then again his *Knowledge*, and *Certainty* grounded on that Knowledge

Knowledge, are both *Infallible*; for his Knowledge when he took it right could not but be *conformable* to the Thing, and the Thing is *Infallibly* as it is. If he took it *wrong* or *mistook* it, and yet be *Absolutely Certain* of it, then again there may be Absolute Certainty of a *Falsbood*, or that a thing is *so* which is *not so*: which is a rare kind of *Certainty* indeed, especially for the *Ground of his Faith*; and Posterity no doubt will owe much to his Memory for the *Invention*. 'Tis left then that he must say he *did not know* whether he took it right or wrong, but *apprehended* he took it right. In which case (to omit that this apprehending or *thinking the Evidence so strong as to determin* assent, is the *Second* kind of Certainty he assigns here before he comes to *Absolute Certainty*) I ask how he can possibly think himself *Certain* a thing is *such*, when he *sees* he does *not* know whether he be mistaken in it or no? And how a Judgment that a thing absolutely *is*, and a Judgment that it *may not be* for any thing he knows, can be consistent together in an Intellectual Nature, without destroying the First Principle of our Understanding, *viz.* That 'tis not Possible the same thing should at once be and not be.

48. I have not done with this new invented *Absolute Certainty* of his. It must spring he says from the *Highest Evidence which in point of Reason the thing is capable of*. Where every expression is Indeterminate and Ambiguous. Suppose (as I urg'd lately) the thing be not capable of any *Clear Evidence* (as himself supposes there is not for such or such a Doctrin to have been taught by *Christ*) why must he needs *Assent* at all? Why does he not *Suspend*? God has endow'd us with a Faculty of doing this, as a bridle to keep us from *Precipitation*, and to preserve us from running into *Error*; & why should we not *use* it, but expose our selves to run headlong into *Mistakes*; both prejudiciall to our Nature, whose Per-

fection is *Truth*; and pernicious, in its Consequences, to the Conduct of our *Lives*? Again, *Certainty*, taken from the *Thing* (as he says this is) signifies a Determination of the Mind by means of the Object, and is the Genuin Effect of some kind of *Evidence*; and, therefore, *Absolute* or *Perfect Certainty* ought to be the Effect of *Perfect Evidence*: nor is any *Evidence* a *Perfect* one, unless it *Concludes*. Now he does not like *Conclusive Evidence*, and so he ought to renounce *Absolute Certainty*. 'Tis as difficult to guess what he means here by those words [*in point of Reason*,] *True Reason* knows no Methods but this: to *Assent* if the *Thing* be *Clear*, and to *Suspend* if it be *Not*; and, to *conclude* or *argue* being the proper Act of Reason straining after *Truth*, what's *not concluded* is not *Clear*, and therefore not to be accepted for an *Absolute Truth* or *Assented* to as such; The summ then (to come close to our present Question) is, that, *Absolute Certainty* of such a Doctrine's having been taught by Christ must either be built on *True Evidence* of the Grounds for it, and then it *cannot* consist with *Deception*, and so is *Infallible*: Or it is *not*; and, then indeed it may sometimes come to *Justify* a great *Propension*, *Hope* or *Deeming* that 'tis so; Or, if I conceive it to be of small concern, an unexamining *letting it pass* for such, but it can never *Justify* an *Absolute Assent*. See more of this Subject, and a perfect Confutation of this wild Assertion in * *Error-Nonplust* and * *Reason against Raillery*. After many rambling sayings of his own he falls to speak of *putting an End to Controversies*, especially, about *Certainty* and *Fatality*. What we have to do with *Fatality* I know not; but I believe he heartily wishes an end of *This Fatal Controversy*; concerning *Certainty*; for he is in a miserable toss about it; being driven now to declare whether he will deny *First Principles*, or renounce his *Unprincipled Doctrin*. The best way I can invent to
end

* from p. 64.
to p. 165. and
fr. p. 173. to
p. 180.

* Discourse
Fifth.
P. 53.

end all Controversies, is this, that, since Controvertists are *Disputants*, and are to produce their *Arguments*; which are good for nothing nor can ever *End Controversies* unless they *Conclude*, those who renounce *Conclusive Evidence* and instead of it bring *Invisible Motives & Qualifications*, may be *expos'd* and turn'd out of the Lists, as being, even by their own Confession *Insignificant Talkers* and *Endless Brabblers*. His wrangle about *Light* and *Darkness*, *Christ* and *Belial* is spoke to in my *Second Catholic Letter*. Let him shew that *his Rule*, Scripture interpreted by *Private Judgments*, does not Patronize *Heresy* as well as *Faith*, (which he will never do) and we will be content to acquit him from that horrid Blasphemy of making *Light* and *Darkness* very consistent; and *Christ* the Author of our Holy *Faith* and *Belial* the Father of *Heresy* and *Lies*, very good Friends; of which wicked Doctrin, 'till he does this, he stands Indicted.

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P. 73. 74.

49. I alledg'd that Scripture being the *Common Rule* to him and all Hereticks, the *particular* or *distinguishing* Rule must be their own *Private Judgments* interpreting *Scripture*. Does he deny this, or shew my Discourse faulty by assigning any other that *particularizes* or *distinguishes* them? No, neither. What does he then? Why he sends me to the old Philosophers to learn Logick. And I tell him with many thanks, I know none, except *Aristotle*, a competent Master for Me. Next, he makes *Sense* to be a *Rule of Judging*, that is an *Intellectual Rule*: which I deny: For the Rule to any thing is the *Immediate Light* to judge of any thing, and multitudes of intervening Knowledges are requisit to inform us when the advertisements of our Senses are *right*; as is evident in the fallaciousness of *Sense* in a Stick seeming crooked in water, the bigness of things seen at distance, and innumerable other particulars. But I ought to *distinguish* between the *Rule of Judgment*, and the *Judgment made ac-*

P. 53.

P. 53. 54.

cording to that Rule. And so I do, if that be all. For the Rule is the *Informer*, & my Judgment the thing inform'd: But yet if my Judgment follow the Information and still go wrong, my Informer was no good *Informer*. The Evidence of this, and the propension of uncorrupted Nature to believe Pastours, Fathers and Teachers, and those who were wiser than themselves in things they were Ignorant of, did (I told him) make the *Generality* of those out of the Church follow the *Way* of Tradition of their *own* Church; and not regulate themselves in the choice of their *Tenets* by their private Judgment of Discretion working upon Scripture's Letter; as is evident in whole Nations (as *Denmark*) meeting in one particular Belief, and whole Sects agreeing in the very Judgment of their respective Leaders; whence the Sense they make of Scripture as themselves understand it, is not their *Rule*. First, he quotes a *Decree* of the Church of *England*, that *nothing is to be requir'd of any man to be believ'd as Faith but what's read in Scripture or may be prov'd by it*. But this makes against himself, unless he thinks the *Generality*, that is, the *Layity* of that Church esteem themselves more able to judge of the Sense of what's read in Scripture, or to prove all the highest Points of Faith by it, than their Pastours and Church-Governours are; for otherwise Nature will and ought to incline them to believe *their* Judgment rather than their *own* in that affair, which is to follow the *Way* of *Tradition*. Indeed, I must confess that by the Doctor's Principles every one of his *sober Enquirers* ought to prefer his own Judgment of Discretion above the Church's; but what *He* says is one thing, what the Dictates of honest Nature teaches Mankind is another. 'Tis confess, the Layity of each Congregation judges the Sentiments of their Leaders to be agreeable to Scripture; but I affirm withall that not one in ten thousand, when he comes at age,

age, lays aside Prejudice, and fetts himself to consider anew by his scanning the Letter whether his Leaders told him right, or presumes of the competency of his own knowledge to judge or determin whether They understood Scripture in the right Sense or no. He talks to us indeed of *Helps*, and how they *call in the old Interpreters of the Church, and desire them to use their own Reason, &c.* But every man sees that *Few or None* stand Indifferent 'till they have us'd all these *Helps*; but *undoubtedly* accept that very Faith in which they were *educated*: And so they continue; 'till the discouraging or reading those of a contrary Opinion, unsettles them and put them into Doubts. Besides if those *Helps* he talks of are not secure from erring themselves as to what they *help* others in, they may *help* them to *Misunderstand* the Sense of Scripture in the Highest Points of Faith, and so *help* them to be *Hereticks*. And yet these are all the best *Helps* his Principles can *Help* them to ; For he assures us and maintains stoutly by affirming them all to be Fallible in what they are to *help* us, that all his *Helps* may be deceiv'd in that very thing in which they are to *help* others : They may indeed according to him, give a *strong guess* at what is Christ's Doctrin, but that's all ; for he allows none to be Absolutely Certain of the *sense* of Scripture, but only of the *Letter*. He proceeds after a strange rate and talks of *Opinions, doubtfull and Obscure places* ; but avoids still to come up to those High Points of Faith, particularly those of a *Trinity* and *Christ's Godhead*, in which he knows I instanc't. Then he blames my Logick, for *not distinguishing between the Rule of Faith and the Help to understand it*. And my Logick remembers its respects to *his no-Logick*, and sends him back word, that since an Intellectual Rule to such a thing is an *Immediate Light* or *Means* to know that thing as his Friend

Dr.

P. 55. 56.

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Dr. T. has told him, *Rule of Faith*, p. 40. and is purposefully fram'd to give us that Knowledge, nay *Essentially Ordain'd* to that End, 'tis a Contradiction to say it needs another thing to lend it *Clearness*, in order to give us Christ's Sense; for then this *other* thing would be clearer than *It* as to that particular Effect; and, so, *This* not the *Other* would be the true Rule of Faith. Yet he will needs prove this Contradiction True, and that it may be a *Rule* and yet not have *Power to regulate* without the help of another; And, by what Argument will he prove it? Oh, he can prove things by better means than *Arguments*. He has an *Instance* still at hand, either when he is *prest* too close, with *another's* Arguments or *wants* one of his *own*. These Instances are good Serviceable drudges and are ever ready to do all his Jobbs; and yet I doubt his Instance brought to prove a Contradiction, must it self be of the same Chimericall Family. Let's see 'tis this, that a *Nurse* teaches Children to *Spell* and *read* the New Testament, & so by degrees to understand Christ's Doctrine; and yet the Faith of those persons is not resolv'd into this *Help*, of the *Nurse's Teaching* but into the *New Testament* it self as *the Ground of their Faith*. I must confess I extreamly admire at this Drs Confidence, and no less at his Imprudence that he does not rather not write at all then perpetually put such shams as these upon his Reader. Are we speaking of all *remote* helps whatsoever, or are we speaking *only* of a Help for the *Rule* to do its *Proper Effect*, which is to give us Christ's *Sense* or our *Faith*? God and Nature has *help't* us with a Rational Being, Eyes, and Brains; Conversation or Masters have *help't* us with skill in the Language in which the Letter of Scripture is deliver'd, and Tradition has *help't* us with the Right Books and Copy of Scripture; Do any of these concern our present enquiry? Are not these all presuppos'd to his *Rule*? The only Question is what
help

help is necessary to give his *Rule* (the rest being all pre-suppos'd) the Power to *regulate* us in knowing the *Sense* of that Book or our *Faith*, as to those Spiritual and most Important Articles? To do this being the *Proper Effect* of his *Rule*, and, a Thing not being what it should be, or is pretended to be, unless it have a power in its self to do its *Proper Effect*, (since it's Essence was ordain'd for it) hence I affirm it must need *no help* to do this, but must have it *of it self*; and therefore if *Scripture's Letters* have not of it self Clearness enough to give those who are coming to Faith the requisite Certainty or knowledge of what's its true *Sense* in those Dogmaticall Points, 'tis *no Rule of Faith*. This is the *only Point*, and therefore must only be *omitted*: what's this to a *Nurse's Teaching* to read? Or what's her Teaching to the Immediate and Certain Light to know *Christ's Sense* in those Main Articles? His Friend Dr. T. goes (by chance) a little more consonantly, and confesses the substance of this discourse of mine, by allowing that the Letter of Scripture must be *Sufficiently Plain*, even in those High Points I mention (*Rule of Faith*, p. 86. 87.) But it seems, that upon second thoughts fearing to be pinch't hard upon that point, they have since that time, chang'd their measures.

50 Put case then one of Dr *St's* Flock should say to him; *Doctor, this very Rule you bid me follow, to my best Judgment tells me you have err'd in holding the true Godhead of Christ*; nay, suppose he should say the same to the whole Church of *England*, what could *He* or that *Church* either, say to such a man according to his Principles? They can only *propose* and *direct*, and that's the utmost they ought to do; and, if he likes not their Proposal & Direction, they ought to let him alone, nay commend him for sticking so close to his *Rule*, as he understands it, without fearing the face of Man. For 'tis the greatest
injustice

Injustice and Tyranny in the world to punish a man Temporally, or (which is worse) by Ecclesiastical Censures for following sincerely this *Rule of Faith*. Besides, who can tell but this man is better stock't with Dr. St's *Morall Qualifications* and Inward Light than his Judges and Pastours are? And then to vex such a Saint is to fight against God: And therefore the Scabb'd Sheep must be let alone to run astray or infect the Flock; let the Church & her Government go where they will. Now, who sees not that these Principles must shatter the Church in pieces, fill her with a multitude of Bedlam Sects, and utterly overthrow Church-Government? But *what would J. S. do* with such a man? Why, first I would endeavour to dispossess him of that Luciferian Spirit of *Pride*, which such wicked Principles have tainted him with, and win him to a rational Humility by representing how all Mankind in their several affairs seek out one more skill'd than themselves and use their best reason in pitching upon him, and then trusting him in things themselves are Ignorant in. I would shew him how the Order of the World, the Commands of God, and his known Duty, do all oblige him to believe the Church in such matters rather than his own Private Interpretations; I would endeavour to shew him that the Preservation of these necessary Orders engages God's Providence to assist his Church and keep her from Erring in Faith, rather than private Men. I would shew him that, since the only thing he doubts of is to know what *Christ* taught, & that God has left some Way to make us sure of his true Doctrin, he must first find out such a Way that, if men follow'd it, would *secure them* from Errour in that particular. Nor would it be hard to demonstrate to him that * Tradition is such a way, and that Scripture's Letter interpretable by private Judgment is not that way. I would shew him how impossible

ibid.

* See it confessed by the Reflector, p. 21.

'tis the Body of the Church should have unanimously *deserted that Way*; And, amongst other things I would inform him how *weakly* Dr. St. had *defended his Own Rule* and *impugn'd ours*; and, lastly, how he and others who follow'd another way, have been forc'd to grant that all the Main Points of Christian Doctrine may be false for any thing they know. These and such like Discourses, I hope, would at first *startle* him, and at length *cure* him, if he were not too deeply tainted with Enthusiasm, or a high opinion of his own *Moral Qualifications* and *Divine Assurances*: For, if he were, he is got beyond the reach of Reason and Humane Discourse; and is not to be helpt by any thing under a Miracle, perhaps not by that neither.

51. He seems to deny People the *Liberty to interpret Scripture against the Teaching Church*. But his discourse sounds *Hollow* when he comes to show he does so. Some slight thing he says about *the Sense of the Teaching Church in the best and purest Ages*; but not a word of what they owe to the *present Church*, which is their Proper and Immediate Instructress and Governess; by which discourse it should seem he holds the *Church of England* none of the *best* nor *purest*. The main point is, whether, if, after having consulted the Primitive Church, and consider'd what Grounds she brought for her Doctrine and Decrees, the Enquirer still likes his own Interpretation better, he is in that case to submit his private Judgment to the Decrees of *That* or *Any Church*; And how the Church is to look upon him in case his private Interpretation leads him into a flat Heresy? These are the true Points, and Tests of Dr. St.'s Principles and yet undiscover'd Consequences; but these are slubber'd over, or rather, indeed, never *toucht*. Yet he complains of me, for being *Obscure*; when as 'tis acknowledg'd he writes *Clearly*, but 'tis *Clearly from the Point*, nor has any

P. 58.

writer Living more untoward Evasions, and indirect wiles, to *blind* the Reader that he may not see the true Question or what we are about. Next follow my self-Contradictions. *Wee* (says he) according to *J. S.* follow Tradition and not follow it; *We* Interpret Scripture by Tradition, and yet *We* set up Scripture against Tradition. *We* allow and not allow to the People a Judgment of Discretion. He's a Terrible Man at persecuting pretended Contradictions, when the most obvious distinction would reconcile them. To avoid the Tradition of the former Church, the Reformers of his Gang set up Scripture at first; and yet Nature and Humility both *oblige* the Generality to follow the Teaching of their own Pastours; and the Pastours *expect* they should do so, and *discountenance* them if they do not. But did I ever say that *He*, and such as *He*, (which is part of this *we*) follow'd the *Way of Tradition* in his own Church? I am so far from that, that I ever verily judge he prefers his own Interpretations before the Sense of all the Churches in the World. The true Contradiction then lies in his own [*we*.] For, the words [*we* follow] and [*we* do not follow] make him both a *Pastour* and *People* too. He is like *Bottom* the Weaver in the Play, who would needs Act *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* both, nay the *Lyon* and *Moonshine* and all. He makes himself at once a *Teacher* and a *Hearer*, or any thing, so he may but pretend me guilty of self-Contradiction. Parallel to the former is his objecting that I say, *No man puts things more into Private hands than he does*, and yet that he *denies* the *People* the same *Privilege* against *Pastoral Authority*. And is it a Contradiction in me to say his *Principles* contradict his own *Practice*? When he's to dispute against that bug-bear Tradition, he is forc't to allow *Private Spirited* Interpretations for his *Rule*; but when he is instructing his Parishioners *the case is alter'd*. He would in that case think his *Prerogative*

of a Pastour uncivilly balk't, should any one, inclining to Socinianism, take the liberty to stand firm to his own Interpretation of Scripture against *his*; and tell him, that to his Judgment of Discretion, he is an Idolater and a Heretick for asserting the Godhead of Christ, and adoring him as such.

52. After this he falls into a high passion, and says that I unconscientiously left out those words [*Every man must judge for his own Salvation*] in repeating his Sense but two lines after. I beg earnestly of the Reader for this once to lend me his Eye-sight, and he will see what a Falsifier I am, or else how insincere a Caviller the Dr is. See *Third Cath. Letter*. p. 92. l. 16. whether when I pretend to put his words, I do not put down expressly [*Every man is to judge for his own Salvation*] Two lines after I resum'd his Discourse into an Argument, and therefore took what was clearly the Sense of it in short, without repeating the whole Sentence *totidem verbis*, as every man does in such a case. My words were these; [*Your Argument, such as it is stands thus; By the Consent of all Christian Churches there is no Infallible Judge, therefore every man must judge for himself.*] Now he conceives, it seems, (for I cannot imagin what else he can mean) that [*for himself*] has not the same Sense as [*for his own Salvation*]: I say it has: For the Judging there spoken of, being Judging of the Sense of Scripture to find out his Faith, the Judging for himself cannot possibly mean any thing else but Judging for his own Salvation; For, surely, Judging for himself in such a circumstance, is not judging where to get a good fat Benefice, or to buy House or Land with a good Title. But the Jest is, himself uses the same words here, p. 60. l. 8. 9. and grants the consequence, that *either there must be an Infallible Judge, or every Man must judge for himself*. Yet this he calls *perverting his Sense, shuffling,*

P. 60.

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packing the Cards, &c. He says too, that 'tis *unkward reasoning*, to say nothing but *Infallibility will content him now*. Pray, which is more *unkward*? If the Judges acknowledge themselves *Fallible*, (in which case nothing can be said to be *True* that is held upon their Testimony) then he *allows them very much Authority*, but not upon other terms. But he is high in choler against me for saying he has an aversion against *the Churches intermeddling in matters of Faith*; and imputes it either to *great Ignorance* or a *malicious Design to expose him to Church Governors*. But his comfort is *he pities my Ignorance and despises my Malice*. This is *Stately and Great*. I do assure him my only Design is to oppose such Principles as leave all to the Fanatick phrenzy of every private Interpreter; and till he satisfies the World better that his Principles are not guilty of this Enormity, I shall still oppose him let him *buff* never so high. The Point is, how does he clear himself? Why, he says *he disputes not against Church-Authority in due proposing matters of Faith*; Certainly Church-Authority is mightily oblig'd to him. A Genuin and Learned Son of the *Church of England*, speaking of this very Doctrin of his, tells him, that

* *Proposals of their own nature are so far from inferring an Authority to Command their reception, that they rather imply a Power in those to whom they are propos'd, at Discretion to Reject them; and so, in the Issue gives the Authority to the People.* Which words contain the full sense of my Discourse here against the Dr and his beloved *Sober Enquirer*. Why is he then so high against me for *exposing* him, when those of the *Church of England* have already *expos'd* him more than I have done? This is no great sign either of *Ignorance* or *Malice*, when persons who are otherwise of different Judgments and Communions, do center in the same opinion of his Doctrin as destructive of Church-Government. But 'tis yet more pleasant,

* Answer to
a Letter a-
gainst Mr. L.
p. 23.

pleasent, that he will not promise he will not *dispute* against Church-Authority even in this *due proposing* Matters of Faith, but with a *Proviso*, that every man is to judge for his own Salvation. As much as to say, If the Church will be so sawcy or so wicked as not to let my *Sober Enquirers* alone to interpret Scripture as they list, or hold what seems to their Wise Worship to be the Sense of it, (which, with him, is *judging for their own Salvation*) but will be censuring or Excommunicating them for Hereticks, if they hap to err in Christ's Godhead for example, or any other such Point, then Church-Authority *have at you* ; for I tell you plainly if you do this I shall and will *dispute against you*. It would be worth our knowing too what the pretty cautious words [*due proposing*] means. There seems to lurk some hidden Mystery in that little monosyllable [*due*] which may come to help the *Sober Enquirers* with an Evasion from submitting to Church-Authority, or obeying it, in case it misbehaves it self *unduly*, or grows so malapert as to restrain them in their licentious Prerogative of interpreting Scripture as their Gifted Fancy inspires them. It looks oddly, and seems to have some ambidextrous meaning in it ; but we will hope the best till he comes to unfold it. Now, because Honourable Company is creditable to those who are highly obnoxious, he names St. *Chrysostom*, St. *Austin*, St. *Thomas of Aquin*, and *Bellarmin* as of his opinion, but with the same sincerity as he pretended all Divines of both Churches, and even my self to hold all Necessary Points may be found by every *Sober Enquirer without the Churches Help* ; as may be seen hereafter §. 57. 'Tis indeed the General Opinion of the Fathers, that we are not always heard when we pray for Temporal Things, or even Spiritual Goods for others ; but that our Request is always granted when we ask Spiritual Goods for our selves. But then,

P. 60. l. 25.

P. 61.

then, 'tis ever understood with this restriction, that we must not make our suit to have Knowledge or Virtue by *Extraordinary* ways, and neglect the *Ordinary* Methods laid already by God's Providence to attain those good Gifts. Our Question then being of understanding those difficult places of Scripture which contain the main Articles of our Christian Belief, and whether they can better attain to the Sense of Scripture with unerring Certainty by their own Private Judgments, *without the Churches Help*, or by *the Churches Means*, and Dr St's Principles asserting the former Method, mine the Later, I do affirm, that none of those Authors hold with him, but would condemn his Tenet for Heresy. He Quotes none of the places except *Bellarmin*, who speaks not of persons looking for Faith in Scripture's Letter as to those Points, but of the Faithfull, *Praying for Wisdom* to live well; and he, as the Dr relates it, *denies the Gift of Interpretation* (the Dr's way to come to Faith) is to be had by Prayer, which is our main Point. However, our Dr pretends himself wonderfully skillfull in our Authors, because he can make a shew of *Quoting* them, tho' it be quite from the purpose. He should have kept an Eye to the State of the Question, and brought his Citations *home to it*; but this is not his way. His main art through this whole Treatise is to keep *that* from the Readers sight, talk in Common, name great Authors for his Vouchers, but never shew *how* they favour him by *applying* them. And then he's safe, by virtue of a great noise & fine *Raree* shows. He ends with railing, at the rate of a man at his Wits End; I desire him to pacify his spleen, for no man that knows me and my circumstances, does or can think I write to *raise* my self, or to be *caressed* (as he phrases it) by any man. I will never court any man's favour, or fear his frowns, when I am defending *Truth*.

P, 61.

P, 62.

53. But the Scene is chang'd, all of a sudden, & I am almost asham'd to reflect as it deserves on what follows in his two next Paragraphs. 'Tis so purely A-la-Mode of *Merry Andrew*; Never did Grave Man make such a Fop of himself. But his Reason was *Nonplust*, and his Fancy was over-heated, and this must plead his excuse: for what could he do better in such ill circumstances? To set right what his Raillery has so ravel'd; I declar'd my Tenet was, that every man is to use his *judgment of Discretion* or his *Reason* in finding out a *Rule* which could ascertain him of all the several Points taught by Christ: Since the Rule of Faith being *antecedent* to Faith, must consequently be the Object of *pure Reason*. That by this Rule he was to *judge for his Salvation*, and of *all Controverted Points*. For, if this Rule gave him Absolute Assurance that all those determinate Points were indeed taught by Christ, then since he acknowledg'd Christ's Doctrin to be *from God*, they were to be held by him to be *Divine* and *True*; If it give him no such assurance of this, being in it self *Fallible*, then they are not to be held *Divine*, nor *True*, nor *Faith*, nor the way to Salvation; since, in that case, they might perhaps be *Diabolical*, *False*, *Heresy*, and the *way to Damnation*. Now no such Rule does he assign us, but leaves it to the *Judgment* of his sober Enquirers to find out those determinate Points in Scripture's Letter; which, in those Articles of so profound a sense is *obscure* to them. Our Judgment of Discretion is to find out a *Certain Light* to walk by in those sublime passages, in which the Light of our own Reason is very dim. His is to do as well as he can in penetrating the Sense of the Scripture in such high passages, tho' he sees he may fall into Error every step. That is, his way is indeed to be a *Rule to our selves*, and scorn to be led by the *Church*, tho' there be all the Reason in the world to think Her wiser than our selves in that affair.

fair. What says the pleasant Dr to this? Or how does he make good *his* judgment of Discretion, or overthrow ours? why, First; he laughs heartily over and over, that I *come closer* to take a view of his Judgment of Discretion after 99. pages. As if my whole Book had been to treat merely concerning *that one* point, and I had never handled it till *now*: whereas his Conscience knows, (but that necessity has forc't him to bid it Farewell) and every Reader sees that above forty other Points were to be handled as they lay in my way, and that this concerning the *Judgment of Discretion*, was the *very last* I was to speak to. What pityfull Trifling is this? Then comes in the *Game at Cards*, *blew apron and Tub* over and over: That I yield to his Sober Enquirer *what he aim'd at*; that I make the Fanaticks *Catholiques*, and his Sober Enquirer a *Judge of Controversies*, and would have him judge *without his Rule*: Which is a continu'd *Series* of willfull and ridiculous Forgeries: For I allow him to judge of *never* a Point of Faith but *by his Rule*, and affirm that he is to find out his Rule by his *Reason* or Judgment of Discretion. But this clear Method he casts a Mist over all the way; and, finding that Seriousness would gravell him, he has recourse to his beloved and still-assisting Friend, Drollery. Next, he asks, what if the *matter* propos'd by this Certain Authority which I have found out by my Reason be very much *against Reason*? And I ask, whether the *Matter* under Consideration be the Object of Naturall Reason, or *no*? If it be *not*, then Reason is to concern it self in judging of the Humane *Authority* of the Church attesting it to be Christ's Doctrin, which is *Subject to Reason*; and not with the *Other*, which is confessedly *above Reason*. He knows I still speak of the High Mysteries and Articles of our Christian Belief which are Supernaturally reveal'd or taught by Christ and his Apostles; and will he have the profound Judgment of discretion

cretion of his Sober Enquirers scan them by their *Reason*? This favors too strong of the *Socinian*. Yet he sticks not to say *the same*, (that is, *Natural*) *Reason helps men to Judge of the Matters propos'd by this Certain Authority*. It makes yet worse for his Credit, that, whereas I instance all along in the Tenets of the *Blessed Trinity* and the *Godhead of Christ*, he stills recurs to *Points necessary to Salvation*; by counterpoising which he seems to think those *Mysteries not necessary to Salvation*. But *who set the bounds of Reason*? why, God and Nature, by allotting *Reason* for its Sphere *Naturall Objects*; and by so doing, precluding her from attempting to sound the *Profound Depth* of *Supernatural* ones by her *Shallow Line*. He is angry that *as soon as this Certain Authority is discover'd*, we then cry, *Good night Reason, I have no more use of you*. This favours yet more strongly then the former. Would he have us, after this *Certain Authority* has *assur'd us 'tis Christ's Doctrin*, still to *suspend* our Belief till we have examin'd the *Mysteries* themselves by our *naturall Reason*? I am loath to name what this signifies. I omit to insist on his bad *Logick*, shall I say, or want of *Common Sense*; who, tho' a *Certain Authority* were suppos'd, yet discourges all along as if the things it proposes may still be false, or need the Examination of *Reason* whether they be false or no. But this argues he has not once in his thoughts the Notion of *True Certainty*, but means some *Mock-Certainty* or *Probability* by that word; otherwise 'twas impossible such a *Fancy* should have a seat in his *Mind*. For the most obvious and *Common Light* of *Reason* tells him that what's *Truly Certain* (as what's built on a *Certain Authority* is,) *cannot* be False, nor can need any further *Scrutiny* whether it be or no.

54. Next he asks, *Are all People Capable of this Certain Reason*? They are, or may be made so according to their pitch, so *Tradition* be rightly represented, and not Per-

P. 64. l. 3 4.

P. 65.

Ibid.

P. 69.

verted as it was by him throughout his Sermon : For nothing is more futable to the Capacity of every one then is the Force of a vast *Witnessing Authority*. And, tho' they were not, yet being in it self Certain, it preserves even those who are incapable of seeing the reason for its Certainty, from erring in Faith while they rely on it, which his Rule does not. He puts Questions and gives Answers here very kindly for his own behoof ; and from such sleight Grounds concludes *he may have True Faith and be sav'd without finding out this Certain Authority*. The latter I leave to God's Mercy, which may, I hope, give him the Grace to repent his impugning known Truths, which with him I fear is too frequent : but he makes himself too Liberall a promise of *True Faith* without it. However he expresses it modestly, and only says *he may have it* ; that is, *he may hap to hold right in Some points of Faith by his private Interpretation of Scripture, without Tradition of the Church ; and he may hap to hold Twenty Heresies*. His fifth Head is ridiculous ; for 'tis a pure Folly to talk of *believing the Scripture*, without knowing certainly *what the Scripture says*. Let him secure this, and none will refuse to yield a perfect and steadfast belief to what Christ has taught us by *it*. Our knowing the *Sense* of it in passages containing dogmatical Tenets of Faith is the only Point between us ; In assigning some Certain Means to do this, he is *dull and flat*, or else perfectly *Silent* ; but mighty *brisk* in what's nothing to our purpose. His Sixth is frivolous, and answer'd with a bare denying that we hold that *Tradition is only to lead us into the Certain Sense of Scripture*. And this he *knew* before, as he did five hundred things he pretends here *unknown* to him. And this was but fitting. For had he *own'd* he *knew* them and the *reason* brought for them, he had stood engag'd to *Answer* them : But by seeming still *not to know* them, he puts us to say our Tenets and bring
 our

our Proofs over and over again; in the mean he reaps the advantage of *gaining time*, and coming off dextrously *at present*. His Seventh is the same with the Second, and spoken to already. His citing Scripture Texts has the same fault with better half this whole Book; *viz.* Something is said *in common* never *apply'd* to the point in hand, or brought *close* to it, but left in that *Raw* Condition, to make the Reader think there is *Something* in it, tho' he knows not well *what*. Our point is, that our Judgment of Discretion is not to be Employ'd about scanning the Mysteries of Faith by our *Natural Reason*, after we have found a Certain Authority proving them to be Christ's Doctrin, or interpreting such Texts of Scripture by our Private Judgments to gain Assurance what is to be held of *Faith*. The first Text [*I speak as to Wise Men, judge ye what I say*] may, for any thing he has shown relate to Manners, or to the avoiding Idolatry spoken of the verse before, which is known by the Light of Nature; or to something relating to or consequent from a Point of Faith already known, as is intimated in the following verses. Of all these they may judge, but *None* of these comes near our business, as appears by the State of the Question. The Second Text is *Prove all Things*. And does he think this can mean, they should consult their natural Reason how it lik't the Misteries, or rather (in case that Text had indeed related to them) does it not signify that they should consider well of the *Grounds* why they Embrac't them? The Third is, *Try the Spirits whether they are of God*. And this is spoken in order to the Antient Hereticks; whose Spirits they were to *Try* by examining whether they deviated from the Doctrin preach't by the Apostles; or, by looking what Grounds or Motives they produc't to prove their new Doctrin to be Christ's. The Judgment of Discretion in this Last case we allow; and the two Former are both of them wide of our business,

P. 67.

ness, unless the Second were meant of examining things by the Grounds for them. It were good to dive into the Drs thoughts, and get light what it is he would here be at: The Apostles (says he) allow'd them *to make use of their Understandings*, tho' themselves, the Proposers were *Infallible*. What mean these dry *Common* words? Does he mean they were to *Understand* what it was the Apostles taught? This is the Duty of every Hearer, Catholick and Protestant, and the very *End* of all *Teaching* and *Preaching*; and, so, it does not reach the *peculiarity* of his *Judgment of Discretion*. Does he mean they were to examine whether the Apostles were Divinely inspir'd or not? This was very laudable in them; for this is to use their Reason e're they allow their Authority, and is the very Judgment of Discretion we recommend; but he is here impugning *our* Judgment of Discretion; and so cannot mean *thus*. He is then contending for a Judgment of Discretion which shall scan the Verity of the Points of Faith themselves, or the *Matters propos'd* even by a Certain Authority, by his Naturall Reason. I am loath to fix a censure upon Common words; but I must tell him that if he means so, and that, tho' we receive the Tenets of a *Trinity* and *Christ's Godhead* (for example) upon a *Certain Authority*, we are still to suspend our Assent, till our Great Judgment of Discretion shall consider well of the *Matters propos'd*, and reject them if such uncouth Articles seem disagreeable to *Natural Reason*, (his *useful Servant* not yet discarded:) If this be his Tenet, as it seems to be, then I must tell him his Principles are perfectly *Socinian*. Whether he follows those Principles in his particular Tenets I am not to judge; but such *Edging* and *Leaning* towards those Principles do, I conceive, oblige him to satisfy the World he is not that way Affected.

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55. But *what if men differ about this Certain Authority wherein*

wherein it lies; and how far it extends? I answer the Authority our Question proceeds on is the Humane Authority of the Church deriving down Christ's Faith: Nor do I know any Catholick who ever impugned that, but one *unknown Nameless Author Lominus*; whom here out of his constant love to sincerity he is pleas'd to call [*Others.*] But, in case any should differ about it, it being a thing *Previous* to Faith, and, therefore, subject to our *Natural Reason*, all I can say is, *the better reason must carry it.* He knows well how many most Eminent Catholick Writers have approv'd and follow'd in their Writings the same way of Controversy I take. But he is not now in such good circumstances as *candidly* to acknowledge any thing. He is put to his shifts; and counterfeit Ignorance does him as much service as any of the rest. But how *proves* he that when we have found a *Certain Authority* we must not *follow* it and *rely* on it? Plain sense tells us we *may* and *ought*. Why, he says 'tis *putting out our Eyes, throwing our selves headlong from a Precipice, and there's an End of Controversies.* Is not this mighty *Learned*? Another man would think that a *Certain Authority* were the only way to *preserve* us from all these Inconveniences, and *keep* us from *erring*, especially in matters only Knowable by *Authority*. But our Dr has a Judgment or Discretion of another mold than Reason has fram'd for him. In the mean time what Answer gives he to my Reason for the contrary position, and that *the relying on a Certain Authority is to keep our Eyes in our Head still?*

* [*In doing this we do not at all relinquish our Reason, but follow and exercise it? For, nothing is more Rational than to submit to an Authority which my Reason has told me is Absolutely Certain, in things which the same Reason assures me can no other ways be known Certainly but by that Authority.* This seems plain sense, and comprizes the whole Point; and for that very reason he thought it not safe to meddle

Ibid.

* Third Catho. Letter.
p. 122.

* From p. 67.
to p. 69.

dle with it; but, instead of doing so, to amuse the Reader with * Seven impertinent Discourses of his own; and *thus* it is he Answers my *Catholick Letters*.

P. 69.

* Dr St's Second Letter
to Mr G.
P. 21.

56. Hitherto he contented himself to impugn me with False Suggestions, nimble Avoidances, pretended Ignorance of our known and oft-repeated Tenet, and with merry Conceits; but now he thunders out his dreadful Indignation against me, with *Angry Viper, Venemous Froth, Spleen, Gall, &c.* By which he gives us to understand that the place I prest upon was very *raw and sore*. At the end of my Discourse I repeated * his avow'd Position, that *Every Sober Enquirer may without the Churches Help find out all necessary Points of Faith in Scripture*. This being a Paradox, so pestilential in its self, and so Pernicious to Church-Government, and to all the Dearest and most Sacred Concerns of Christianity, I

* Third Catholic Letter.
P. 104.

could do no less, out my Zeal for those Best Goods, than brand it with these just Censures, *viz.* * that it was *the very First Principle, nay, the Quintessence of all Heresy; Fanaticism in the Egg; perfect Enthusiasm when hatcht, and downright Atheism when fledg'd*. This I said, and thus-I justify my Charge. To make private men competent Interpreters of Scripture as to *all necessary Points of Christian Faith, without the Churches Help*, and yet not to furnish them with any Certain Means of not erring or mistaking its Sense, is the *very First Principle of all Heresy*; For, * *Non enim nata sunt Hæreses nisi dum Scriptura bene intelliguntur non bene. No Heresy has any other source, but when the Scriptures good in themselves are understood in an ill Sense*. Next, let this wild licentious Principle, that *they need not the Churches Help to find out all Necessary Points in Scripture*, settle in the Heads of the *Mobile*, 'tis perfectly consequent that they must judge that whatever the Church holds contrary to what they conceive is the sense of Scripture, is either *False or Unnecessary*;

* Augustin.
Tract. 18. in
Joan.

cessary;

cessary; and in case the Church judges that what *They* hold is a Grand *Herefy*, and therefore that the contrary Tenet is a *Necessary Point*, and therefore subjects them to Her Censures, they must hate the Churches Government as the worst of Tyrannies that would oblige them to forgo their Rule, renounce their Faith, and obey Man rather than God. In a word, this Principle naturally leads them to *contemn* the Church and her Pastours, as neither able to *help* them in their *Way* to Faith, nor to *Govern* them *in it*; Unless the Dr means by *Governing*, that the Church-Officers are to *see*, that each of them follows their own Fancies, and decline not from such Tenets (let them be never so *Heretical*) as their wise Judgment of Discretion has thought fit to embrace, which is *Fanaticism* in the height. Again, the Conceit of this *self-sufficiency* codling as I may say, in the hot Brains of many of those Fanaticks, enfranchized thus blessedly from the Churches Government, Dr St. still assuring them they cannot miss of knowing Gods Will in such Points so they but *pray for Wisdom*; and Common Sense telling them they are no *Scholars*, nor have this Knowledge by *Humane Means*; it follows necessarily that they must think their Prayer is *heard*, and that they have it by *Divine Inspiration*. Whence they will imagin the Holy Ghost buzzes Truths in their Ears like a Bee in a Box, which is *perfect Enthusiasm*. And it will come pat to their purpose, and help forward very well, that Dr St. when he stood engag'd to *shew* or *produce* his Proofs that his Faithfull have Absolute Certainty of their Faith, that is of the true *Sense* of Scripture, confesses plainly no such Proofs are producible and recurs to *Moral Qualifications* and many other *Invisible* Requisites to give men assurance of it; which are impossible to be known by *Human Reason*, being only Knowable by God Himself. Whence, Nature obliging all men to guide themselves

by

by some *sure Light* in things of Infinite Concern, and all Motives that should appear outwardly to *Reason*, being, according to him, *Cloudy* and *Dark*, it directs them necessarily to seek for this *sure Light* within; and so become *Enthusiasts*. In the mean time not to speak of *Atheists* who are By-standers and confirm'd in their *Atheism* by seeing such Bedlam-doings amongst Professors of Christianity, imbu'd with no better Principles than what he gives them; the more refin'd & ingenious sort of Mankind, who are too wise to be led in the dark, & strain their best endeavours to search after solid Grounds, by which they may be perfectly assur'd of Christs Faith, or the sense of Scripture, in such Points; & find that none such could be brought by the famous Dr. St. but that, when he was most highly engag'd to produce his Proofs for that most important Point, he recurs still to holes as *dark* as the *private Spirit*; What can they do other (were there no better Grounds than his producible) but conclude that there is *No* Certainty of Christian Faith at all, and that the Greatest Professors and Writers do by their *Carriage* confess as much; and thence come to apprehend that Religion is a meer *Cheat* to keep up the Interest and Ambition of those who look for rich *Livings*, and affect to have many *Followers*; which will bring them to a *Mepris* of Religion it self, and so dwindle into *Atheism*. This is the Natural Progress of Dr St's Principles. From which ill Consequences he shall never clear himself till he *shows* us the Light and Method giving him and his *No Church men* Certainty of the *Sense* of Scripture; and this such an *Absolute* one as can in True Reason beget and justify a most *Firm* and *Unalterable* Assent that the *Tenets* they hold are indeed *Christs True Doctrin*; and till he restores to the Church and her Government that necessary Authority of which his ill-contriv'd Principles have robb'd her: Let him not think

think to acquit himself by telling us here of his allowing the Church a Power of *Proposing* and *directing* in Faith. A Learned Son of the Church of England has * told him *A Private Person* may do the Former; and that the Latter is *such a Liberall Grant as was given to the Statues of Mercury, which of old were set up to direct passengers in their Way, and leaves Men much at like Liberty to regard either.* More is justly and prudently requir'd, viz. *A Power to make her Declarations Law*; and this as to Matters of Faith, & not only in things belonging to *Order and Decency*; otherwise the Latter without the Former, makes (as he argues very well) *some kind of Fance about the Church against Schismatics, but lays her open to all manner of Hereticks.*

* Answer to
a Letter a-
gainst Mr. L.
p. 23, 24:

Ibid.

57. This just Censure of mine, upon the Drs. Principles, was such a *Choak-Pear* to him, that 'tis no wonder he *keek't* at it so vehemently. The Great Credit he had got (whether for defending *Christian Faith*, or no, the Reader is to judge) made him *scorn* to bring it up again and *retract* it: But he uses all the Arts imaginable to *Palliate* and *Excuse* it, and those such wretched ones that 'tis a shame to mention them; and, certainly, never was so *Heavy a Charge* so *Miserably refused*. He says confidently this Doctrine of his is *own'd by all Men of Understanding in both Churches*. Whereas, if he can show me *any* one Catholick who maintains that he can have any Faith at all or ground such a Firm & sacred Assent upon his own private Interpretation of Scripture *without the Churches Help* in those most sublime and necessary Articles which have been *dubious* and contested between the Church and any Heretick, (of which only we speak) he will do more than Miracle. But I am mightily mistaken; he will name *one*, and who should that be but *J. S.* himself: What a boldness is this, to make me his Patron to defend him in that very Position which I am in this very place *Impugning*? Well but what says *J. S.* Why,

P. 70.

he says that every man is to judge for his own Salvation, and of the best way to his Salvation, and of all the Controversies between them and us, and especially of the true Grounds of Faith, and all this without the Churches Help. Now J. S. says indeed that a man coming to Faith does by his Reason find out the True Rule and True Church; that thus he Judges for his own Salvation, by using his Reason to find out a Rule Ground or Way to right Faith which is to bring him to Salvation; that, by his Rule thus found out, he Judges of all our Controversies, in judging that to be Christ's true Doctrine which that Rule recommends as such: but is this to judge of Points of Faith without the Churches Help, when that very Rule by which he judges of them is avow'd by him to be the Churches Testimony? Above all, does he not all along declare his abhorrence of finding out Faith in Scripture's Letter by private Judgments, which is the Drs Position? And must J. S. still be of the Drs Sentiment, tho' he in all occasions contradicts it, disputes against it, and baffles it? What will not this nonplust man say, when he is put to his Shifts! Any Common words, tho' when apply'd to particulars they be directly contrary to him, must be presum'd to be for him; in despite of a long and constant Tenour of all circumstances, and whole discourses to the contrary: whoever peruses my *Third Catholick Letter* from p. 99. to the End, will see that my way of Judging for our Salvation is as opposite to his as one Pole is to another, and he has the incredible Confidence to make them the Same. At length he hopes to come off by alledging that he spoke it only by way of Supposition, that *If one may without the Churches Help find out the Church's Authority in Scripture, then why not all necessary Points of Faith?* And, was this All he said? Indeed, he craftily introduc's his Position Conditionally; but did he not, after the words [** Then every such Person (viz. any sober*

P. 71.

* Dr St's Second Letter to Mr. G. P. 21.

sober Enquirer) may without the Church's Help find out all necessary Points of Faith] Espouse the Position it self, which had been thus introduc't ; and this most Peremptorily ; by immediately subjoyning these words [which is a Doctrin I am so far from being asham'd of, that I think it most agreeable to the Goodness of God, the Nature of the Christian Faith, and the Unanimous Consent of the Christian Church for many Ages.] And will he now tell us after all this Positive asserting it, that it only proceeds upon a *Supposition*, a *why not*, &c a *Parity of Reason*. He objects I answer it not. Why ! was it an *Argument* ? or must I stand answering every voluntary saying of his (which are infinit,) every *Supposition*, and every *why not* ? If I must needs speak to it, the *Impatience of Reason* consists in this, that the Church being constituted by God to *instruct* the Faithfull in their Faith, it was but fitting Scripture should be *Clearer* in those Texts that concern the Churches *Governing* them in Faith and their Obligation to *hear* her, than in the particular Points, which they were to be assur'd of by *her Teaching*. Besides, the Former Point *viz.* the following the Church's Instructions and being govern'd by her in their Faith, is a kind of *Morall Point*, whereas the other Points were, many of them, *Sublime Mysteries* ; and therefore, not so easily Intelligible without a Master. And St. *Austin* had beforehand confuted his pretended *Parity of Reason*, by telling him, that * *Proinde, quamvis huius rei, &c.* Wherefore, tho' no Example of this thing were produc't out of the Canonick Scriptures, yet the Truth of the same Scriptures is held by us even in this Matter, when we do what seems good to the Universall Church, which the Authority of the same Scripture Commends. And, because the Holy Scripture cannot deceive us, whoever fears to be deceiv'd by the Obscurity of this Question, let him consult the same Church concerning it, which (Church) the Holy Scripture demonstrates without any Ambiguity. Where he clearly intimates the in-

* Aug. lib. 1.
contra Cres.
con. cap. 33.

fallibility of the Church; that 'tis to be consulted in *disputed* Points (and all *Controverted* Points, of which we speak, have been call'd into *Doubt*) which makes its *Help* very *Speedfull*; and, (which I chiefly insist on) that its Authority is *Clearly* and *without any Ambiguity demonstrated in Scripture*; whereas yet in his Second Book *de Doctrinâ Christianâ*, he acknowledges the Obscurity of Scripture in divers places, *Obscurè quædam dicta densissimam caliginem obducunt. Some things, spoken obscurely, involve us in thickest Darkness*; And if any be *Obscure* then surely those necessary and High Mysteries of our Faith, which are of such a *Deep Sense*, must be such, when they come to be scann'd by Eyes as yet unenlighten'd with Faith; as the same Father cited in my *Fourth Catholick Letter* has also told him.

P. 31. 32.

P. 73. 74.

58. After this he sums up his Performances, and tells us *in short* how he has err'd *at large*. Next he gives us a lame excuse for his Indirect Answer to the Fourth Question propos'd at the Conference, and in effect only commits over again the same Faults he was charg'd with, a little more formally, as his fashion is, and then calls it an *easy Answer*; and if it be an answer at all, I must confess 'tis an *easy* one; for any man may *with ease* answer a thousand Objections in a trice at that rate: nothing is *easier* than to omit all that is *objected*. But I dare undertake that whoever reads my *Third Catholick Letter*. p. 37. 38. 39. 40. where four several prevarications were charg'd upon him in giving one single Answer to Mr. G's Question, will judge it so far from *easy* that 'tis *Impossible* for him to answer even with any degree of plausibility. But with this sleightness he slips over most of my Objections in my Letters, and supplies the defect with *confident Talk*, or a *Scornfull Jest*. But, because his main shuffle is his altering those words of the Question, [*All the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles*] into [*All mat-*
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ters necessary to Salvation] and this is his constant evasion, we will examin it more particularly in order to the sole End of the Conference to which all the particular Questions were to be directed, viz. *his showing Grounds of Absolute Certainty for his Faith.* 1. I ask, with the good leave of his Jest, Does he think *Christ* and his Apostles taught any *unnecessary* Points? If not; why did he use such cautious diminishing expressions, and instead of *All their Doctrin*, put, *All matters necessary to our Salvation?* 2. Christians are wrought up to the *Love of Heaven*, the Immediate Disposition to it, by *Motives*, and *Some* may need *more* than *Others*; nay the variety of Peoples Tempers and Circumstances is so Infinite that scarce *two* persons will precisely need the *same*. He is to acquaint us then *how* he *knows*, or how he can *make out*, that every man shall, by reading the Scripture, be sure to find his own *Quota* of Motives adjusted and *erving* for his particular Exigencies? 3. Is he *Sure* they cannot *err* as to what's necessary to their Salvation? If, provided they do their best, they cannot, then *every* man is so far *Infallible*; which the Doctor has deny'd hitherto to *all Mankind* but to *himself*. If they *can err* in matters necessary to Salvation, then doubtless many *will err*, and how can error *Save* them? 4. Tho' all cannot err in all *Moral* Points, yet can he shew us any thing securing them from Erring in all those Articles of Faith held by the Church, and renounc'd by her Heretical Dissenters ever since *Christ's* time? If he *cannot*, (and he declines shewing us they *can*, nay he by his Doctrin confesses they *may*) then they may be *Sav'd* tho' holding all the Heresies that ever were; in which case I doubt he will scarce find them competent Assurance of their Salvation. Again, how knows he but the mixture of many of those gross Errours may not as much *deprave* their Souls as their understanding *plainer* places will *edify* them; especially if the Church interposes, and Excommunicates them for Hereticks?

* Rule of
Faith. p. 86.
87.

Hereticks? For his Grounds forbid them to meddle with those high Points, but leave the whole Scripture to their scanning, and his *approved* Friend Dr. T. says they are * *Plain*, and so are subject to their profound Judgment of Discretion. 5. He must tell us how must Church-Disciplin be exerciz'd upon such a Miscellany of Heterogeneous Members of which many obstinately *deny*, what others pertinaciously *affirm*? 6. Is the holding the God-head of *Christ*, and that *God* dy'd to save and redeem Mankind, a Matter *Necessary to Salvation*? Or is it enough to hold it was only a *Man* to whom they owe that highest Obligation to *Love* him? Let him speak to this at least; For I am not to expect but his airy *wordish* Divinity makes him look upon the Mystery of the most Blessed *Trinity* as on a kind of dry Speculation. Tho', were it seasonable to dilate on that Article, I could shew him that, besides it's exceeding Usefulness to the sublime Contemplatives, the most Sacred and most Influential Points of Christian Faith, and the main Body of Christian *Language*, and the *Truth* of it, depend on it's *Verity*. Lastly, Who told him that all sorts of People who are yet Unbelievers and looking after *Christ's* true Doctrin, shall by reading Scripture come to *all-saving Faith*? Has he it by *Divine Revelation*, or by *Reason*? Or, will he recur to *Divine Assurances* to keep *Particular* Persons from *Errour*, and yet *deny* them to the Church? If so, how *proves* he *This* at least? I wish he would speak out fairly and candidly to these Points, and make something *cohere*: For I profess with all sincerity I cannot for my heart make any *Idea* or Sense of this Motly Church which his Principles would patch up. The several Members of it hang more *loosely* together than if they were ty'd to one another with *Points*: Nay, they agree worse than Fire and Water, and all the several *Contrarieties* in Nature: for they are distanced by direct *Contradicti-*

on of one to the other. Whence they are utterly incapable of any kind of Coalition; there being no imaginable means left to *refract* the irreconcilably-opposit Qualities of his *Affirmative* and *Negative* Faithfull, or reduce so many Independent private-spirited Members into one Compound. He is to shew us then how the parts of this *Rope of Sand* (as it may more fitly be called) must hang together. I much fear it will be *Invisibly*, by vertue of their being of the *Elect*, and at the same rate as the Terms *coher'd* in the *Invisible Proofs* he alledg'd to *shew* us he and his Followers had *Christ's* true Doctrin.

59. We shall never have done with this *Purse* of his. He is so fond of the pretty Similitude that he puts it here over again *at large*, and spends incomparably more time and pains in defending it, than he does in making out the Absolute Certainty of his Faith; tho' he both stood engag'd to do it, and any good Christian too would think it were far more worth his while. Had he done this, the rest might have been more fairly compounded, and his Purse have remain'd *unransack't*. However, he thinks it sutes well with the Conceit he had of Scripture, but I am sure it sutes not at all with our purpose, his *shewing the Absolute Certainty of his Faith*. Hence I * told him that Scripture's containing Faith was impertinent to the whole drift of the Conference; That the only business was how to get the Gold and Silver of Faith out thence with Absolute Certainty; and how to secure those that aim'd to *enrich* themselves by it, that instead of extracting the *Pure Gold of Truth* by understanding right those high and most Inestimable Articles, the *ransackers* of it did not draw out thence the *Impure Droß of Error and Heresy*. Lastly, that he ought to have put *two* Purses. One, the *Heads* and *Hearts* of the Faithfull, into which the Apostles put this *Heavenly Treasure* of Faith by their *Preaching*; the Other,

P. 75.

* Third
Cath. Letter
from p. 41.
to p. 48.

Other, the *Book of Scripture* into which they put it by *Writing*; and that Faith was properly in the *Former* only, in regard *Truth* is no where *Formally* but in the *Minds* of *Intellectuall Beings*; whereas it was only in *Words Written* as in a *Sign*; that is, *no more properly* than *Wine* was in a *Bush*; and that therefore the former had incomparably *Better Title* to be the *Purse* (if no *Metaphor* else would serve his turn but such an odd one) at least it ought not to have been quite set aside. But the Dr. without troubling himself much to mind what any body says but himself (by which Method of Answering, he has left, above *forty* parts for *one*, of my several Discourses *unanswer'd*) will needs have Scripture to be the *only Purse*, & *Containing Faith* shall be enough for *His* purpose, Ay, that it shall, tho' it be to *No* purpose. And, so, he tells us, that *If all the Doctrin of Christ be there, we must be Certain we have all, if we have the Scripture that contains all.* And I tell him what common Sense tells all Mankind, that a man may have all *Aristotles* works which *contain* all his Doctrin, and yet not *know* or *have* one Tittle of his Doctrin: Nor, by consequence, has the Dr. one jot of *Christ's* Doctrin by *having* meerly the Book that *contains* it. Shall we never have done with this ridiculous and palpable Nonsense? How often has it been prov'd against him in my *Catholick Letters* that the *having* a Book which *contains All Faith* as in a *Sign* (for words are no more) argues not his *having* any Faith at all, unless he knows the *Signification* of that *Sign*? Let's examin then the meaning of the word [*have.*] A Trunk *has* the Book of Scripture when that Book is laid up in it; and that Book *contains* all Faith; and, so, that Trunk may be his Logick *have* all Faith. Dr. *St* has the same Book, and by *having* it, *has* according to him, *all Faith* too. I ask, *Has* he all Faith by *having* the Book, any other way then the senseless Trunk *has* it. If he *Has* then he *has* it in his *Intellectuall Faculty*

as a *Knowing* Creature should *have* it ; and, if so, he *knows* it, that is, he knows the *Sense* of it as to *determinate* Points in it, for *All* *Christ's Faith* consists of those *determinate Points* : But he still waves his *having* Knowledge of *determinate Points*, and talks still of Faith only as *contain'd* in Scripture *in the lump* ; and, 'tis *in the lump* in the Book too lying in the Trunk ; whence, abstracting from his Knowledge of the particulars of Faith, the wooden Trunk *has* all Faith as much as *He*. He'll say, he believes *implicitly* all that's contain'd in Scripture whether he *knows* the Particular Points, or no : But is not this to profess he believes *he knows not what* ? Or is Implicit Belief of all in the Book, *Saving Faith* ; when 'tis the vertue of the *Particular Points* apply'd to the Soul's *Knowing* Power, and thence *affecting* and *moving* her, which is the Means of *Salvation* ? He tells us, indeed, (for he must still cast in some good words) that *he pretends not 'tis enough for Persons to say their Faith is in such a Book, but* — Now did I verily think that the Adversative Particular [*But*] would have been follow'd with [*they must be sure 'tis in it.*] But this would have made too good Sense and have been too much to the Point. His [*but*] only brings in a few of his Customary lukewarm Words which are to no purpose, *viz.* that *they ought to read, and search and actually believe whatever they find in that Book.* He means, whatever they *fancy* they have found in it ; for he gives neither his Reader nor *them* any Security, but that after their *Reading* and *Searching*, they may still believe *wrong*. He skips over that Consideration as not worthy, or else as too hard, to be made out, and runs to talk of things *Necessary* and not *Necessary*. I wish he would once in his life speak out and tell us how many Points are *Necessary* for the Generality of the Faithfull, and whether *God's dying for their Sins* be one ; and then satisfy the World that the *Socinians*, who *deny* that Point,

P. 76.

do not read, search and actually believe what their Judgment of Discretion tells them is the Sense of Scripture ; and yet, notwithstanding all this, do actually believe a most damnable *Heresy*. But still he says if a man reads and considers Scripture as he ought, and pray for Wisdom, he shall not miss of knowing all things necessary for his Salvation. So that unless we know that he and his Party do pray for Wisdom and not pray amiss, and consider Scripture as they ought, none can be Certain by his own Grounds that He and his good Folks have any Faith at all, or that their Rule directs them right. He would make a rare Converter of Unbelievers to *Christ's* Doctrine ; who, instead of bringing any Argument to prove that what his Church believes is truly such, tells them very sadly and soberly, He has right Knowledge of it and is sure of it, because he has consider'd Scripture as he ought and begg'd Wisdom of God. But if this sincere Seeker hap to reflect, that these pretences are things he can never come to know, and that *Socinians* and all other Sects equally profess to consider Scripture as they ought and to pray for Wisdom too, and yet all contradict one another ; he must, if he have Wit in him, and light upon no better Controvertists, think Christians a company of Fops ; who can shew him no assured Ground of Faith, but such a blind one as 'tis impossible for him to see ; and would have him believe that That is a Certain Means for him to arrive at *Christ's* Faith, which every side, as far as he can discern, do equally make use of, and yet are in perpetual variance and Contention with one another about it : So that our Doctor got deep into his old *Fanaticism* again ; and, which is yet something worse, would have pure Nonsense pass for a Principle to secure men of the Truth of the Points of Faith we believe, and be taken for a good Argument in Controversy. Certainly, never was weaker Writer, or else a Weaker Cause.

60. I am glad he confesses that a *Rule of Faith must be Plain and Easy*, and that, otherwise, *it could not be a Rule of Faith for all Persons*. Let him then apply this to the Dogmatical Points which are only in Question, and shew it thus *Easy* to all Persons in those Texts that contain those Articles, and his Work is at an End. But alas! that *Work*, tho' 'tis his *only Task*, is not yet begun; nor, for any thing appears, ever *Will*. For 'tis a desperate Undertaking to go about to confute daily experience. What new Stratagem must be invented then to avoid it? Why he must slip the true Point again and alter it to an Enquiry, *Whether the Scriptures were left only to the Church to interpret it to the People in all Points, or whether it were intended for the General Good of the Church, so as to direct themselves in their Way to Heaven, and consequently, whether it may not be open'd and understood by all Persons in Matters that are necessary for their Salvation*. What a rambling, what a clutter of Questions is here, when he knows, and it has been repeated near a hundred a times over, that our only Question is, *whether the Letter of Scripture be intelligible by all sorts coming to Faith in those Revealed Articles which are properly Christian with such a Certainty as is fit to build Faith upon*. But this is one main part of his Confuting Talent, to throw in twenty Questions so none of them be the right one. However, tho' he'll not keep the Way, he'll triumph unless we follow him out of the Way. To his Questions then I answer 1. That none but Madmen ever thought or said that the Church was to interpret it as obscure to the People in all Points. For, ordinary Moral passages, such as the Ten Commandments are plain enough of themselves. Why did he not Instance in the *Trinity*, the *Godhead of Christ* and such like, which and *only which* we say are *Obscure*? Because, that had been to speak to our purpose, and he thought it *safer* for him to suggest other matters which

were not all to purpose. 2. They were intended for the *General Good of the Church*, to direct them in their *Lives*, and, so in their *Way to Heaven*; and to that end are freely read by all that can understand Latin, and might likely have continued permitted to all even of the most vulgar capacities, had not men of his Principles made them think themselves, when they had got a Bible in their hands, wiser than the whole Church. Whence they came to wrest them to their own Destruction, and, therefore, it being now *not for the General Good* of such proud Fools, the Church took care they should not be promiscuously allow'd to all, tho' indulg'd to many, even in the Vulgar Tongue, and explain'd and preach'd to *All* by their Pastours. Lastly, None knows distinctly what he means by *Matters necessary to Salvation*; He should mean such as those sublime Points so often repeated; but then he must make out such passages *can be understood by all Persons* looking after Faith with unerring Certainty to secure their Faith from being so many *Falshoods or Heresies*; But he was not able to do this, tho' he pretended the *Rule for all persons* must be *plain and Easy*. As far as I can guess by a man's words whose whole Discourse is made up of *Reserves*, he mistakes the *Rule of Manners* for the *Rule of Faith*; and thus meant 'tis indeed *plain and Easy*, but as 'tis such 'tis nothing to the Question in debate, which is of Christian *Faith*, & so 'tis nothing to *our purpose*. I, but Bellarmin says, Scripture is a Rule, and that a Certain and Infallible one. But when it comes to the proof he speaks only of the Old Testament, and this as to the *Law, Testimonies, or Commandments*, which are easily intelligible as being either Levitical Ordinances, or Moral Precepts. I, but Christ proves his *Doctrin by the Scripture*, and confutes the Sadduces from them. Well, give us such an Interpreter of Scripture as Christ was, and we shall not doubt but they will prove
his

his *Doctrin*, and confute all the Hereticks in the World. His referring the Pharisees to Scripture was *ad hominem*; for they allow'd the Scriptures yet would not believe his Miracles; Tho' sure Dr *st.* will not say but *Christs* Miracles were in their own Nature more convincing Arguments than Interpretations of Scripture made or allow'd by the Pharisees. But what's all this to our purposes. I gave three senses of the word [*Rule*] in my *Third Catholick Letter*, and shew'd him in which of those Senses it *was* and *could* only be call'd a *Rule* in our circumstances. But I might as well have spoke to a deaf man: He must either counterfeit he never heard of it, or he saw he must be baffled. *Common Words* are his constant refuge, and to speak *distinctly* exposes him to be *Nonplust*. His Friend * Dr *Tillotson* maintains that a *Rule of Faith is the next and immediate Means whereby the Knowledge of Christs Doctrin is convey'd to us*. Does he pretend that Learned Cardinal holds Scriptures Letter to be such a Rule for all People coming to Christian Faith to know certainly its sense in these High Mysteries, without the Churches Interpretation? The Dr knows he abhors the Tenet as the source of all Heresy. Yet he quotes him on to say that *Nihil est notius, Nihil est Certius, nothing is more known, nothing more Certain than the Scripture*; and immediately applies it against me for saying that the * *Sense* of it as to the *Understanding the Mysteries of our Faith* was not easy to be got out of the Letter. But where's his *Sincerity*? Not a syllable has *Bellarmin* of Scriptures being so *known* as to its *sense*, nor any thing that looks that way. * He speaks only of the Canon or Books being *most known* by the *Consent of all Nations* who for so many Ages acknowledg'd its highest Authority; and that it is *most Certain and True* (in its self) as not containing *Humane Inventions* but *Divine Oracles*. So that our Learned Dr is exceedingly brisk when he gets

P. 82. 83.

* Rule of Faith. p. 40.

P. 78.

* Third Cath. Letter P. 43. 44. 45.

* Bellarm. de verbo Dei. Lib. 1. 2.

gets the *Sound* of any word on his side, no matter whether the sense be *for* him or *against* him. If he can but gull his Reader dextrously his work is done. For a Transition to treat of a *Rule*, he tells the Reader that I have spent Twenty Years hard Labour about it. I have indeed Employ'd some years and much pains in writing severall Treatises to settle Christian Faith (as to our knowledge of it) on a *Sure Basis*, which he and his Co-Partners are still *Undermining*; and I glory in the Performance. In return, I will not tell the Dr that Mr Lowth says he spent a longer time (that is * full Five and Twenty years) in a worse Employment. I shall only say that I have through God's Blessing, in less then two Months time, writ a little Treatise against his *Principles* called *Error Nonplust*, which he has been fifteen years in answering; and all his Quirks will never enable him to give it even a plausible Reply in fifteen more.

61. And now we are come to scan the Nature of a *Rule*: Which being a Point to be manag'd meerly by *Reason*, the Reader must expect that one of us must necessarily speak *perfect Nonsense*. For, however both sides may talk prettily & plausibly when the business is handled in a *Wordsy* way of *Glossing* Citations, & such knacks of *Superficial* knowledge where the waxen ambiguous expressions may be made pliable to the Writers Fancy; yet the *Natures of Things* will not brook they should be *Injur'd*, but will *Revenge* themselves upon him that *wrongs* them by exposing him to the shame of speaking perfect Contradictions. I * alledg'd that the word [*Rule*] speaks *Rectitude*, and that such an *Evident* one as preserves those who regulate themselves by it from *Oliquity* or *Deviation*; that is, in our case, from *Error*. After the Dr. had play'd the Droll a while upon particular words taken asunder from their fellows, as is his usuall manner, he grants, *There wants but one word to make it past Dispute*, viz. who effectually regulate

* Answer to
Mr Lowth's
Letter. p. 17.

* Third
Cath. Letter
p. 81.

(III)

late themselves by it. Now the word *Regulate* has clearly an *Active* Signification; whence, it being impossible an *Action* should be without an *Effect*, it follows that *Efficiency* or *Effectualness* is involv'd in it's Notion: So that, to do a thing *Effectually* does not signify any better degree of doing a Thing, but only to do it *really* and *indeed*. He pretends [*Regulating*] is an *Ambiguous* word, and therefore he assigns it a double Signification. One of them is, *what a Man doth in Conformity to his Rule*: And Common sense tells us that as far as a man acts *Unconformably to his Rule*, he is not *Regulated* by that Rule, whence, to act *conformably to a Rule* is the self same as to be *Regulated* by the Rule to which he is to conform. This then is one Signification of *Regulating*; and 'tis a *right* one; for to *regulate* one's self by a Rule is nothing else but to *Act conformably to it*. Lets see the other sense of the word *Regulating*. 'Tis this. To * *Profess* * *Declare* and * *Own* to conform to a Rule, but *not conform* to it, that is, not *follow* that Rule or *Regulate* themselves by it. Now, only to *Profess*, *declare*, and *own* to conform to a Rule and *not conform*, is *not to follow it* or *Regulate themselves by it*. So that our Learned Dr. has given us here *Two* sorts of *Regulating*; One, which is *Regulating*, the other which is *not Regulating*. Let us put an Instance. The Rule of Justice is to pay every man his own: Now comes an unconscionable Debtor, and maintains he has *followed* that Rule or *Regulated* himself by it in some Sense; because he has *profess'd*, *declar'd* and *own'd* he has follow'd that Rule, tho' he has not *Effectually* and *Indeed* done so. Is not this a special way of *Regulating* himself by the Rule of Justice, and a most *Cheap* way for a Man to pay debts without disbursing a farthing? Yet he may justify himself by Dr. S's Distinction, and maintain that he has paid them *Professingly*, *owningly*, and *declaringly*, tho' not *Effectually*. Yet the Dr. is mighty fond of this choice Distinction, and says *All Mr S's Subtlety vanishes*

* P. 79. l. 25.

P. 80. l. 20.

* P. 79. l. 27.

* P. 80. l. 22.

wishes into nothing by plain and so easy a Distinction. Notwithstanding, as Nonsensicall as it is, he will bring two *Instances* to make it good, *viz.* That there is one sort of *Regulating* which is *Not-Regulating*. The one is of a *Ciceronian*, who *declares he orders his Speech by his Manner*, and yet for want of *Sufficient skill and Care may use Phrases which are not Cicero's*. Now, 'tis plain that to *Regulate* himself by *Cicero* is to *use his Phrases*; and can he then *regulate* himself by *Cicero* when he *does not use his Phrases*? Can he be truly said to *Regulate* himself by him, when he does *not use his manner of speaking*, meerly because he *Professes* and *Declares* he does it? Or can he be said to *regulate* himself by a *Rule* in that very thing in which he *Deserts* that *Rule* and regulates himself by some *other Author* or his own *Fancy*? Did ever *Common Sense* go so to wrack! If he says he *intended* to follow *Cicero* but *mistook*, I understand him; but *intending* to do a thing is not *doing* it; *intending* to get *Riches* is not to get *Riches*, otherwise none need be *poor*. His *Second Instance* is, that *some may Profess that Christ's Commands are their Rule*, and yet through their own *Fault* may *deviate from them* or *Sin*. But can *Sinners* with any sense be said to *regulate themselves* by *Christ's Commands*, when they *Sin* meerly because they profess to follow his *Rule of Life*? Or can any man of a settled *Brain* (*Dr St.* still excepted) pretend a *Sinner* can be said to be *regulated* by that *Holy Rule*, and *deviate* from it, or *Desert* it at the same time? So that his *Instances* as well as his *Distinctions* are pure *Folly* and *Contradiction*. These *Performances*, we must think, qualify him to laugh at my *Admirable Logick* for not allowing his palpable *Nonsense*; whereas himself is still caught stumbling in the plainest paths of that *Common Road* to *True Learning*. I could wish some of *Dr St's* *Friends* would advise him soberly to fall to *Quoting* and *Gleaning Notes*, & then stitching them handsomely and Methodically

Ibid.

thodically together; where he is in his own Element; for in that Wilderness of words he may take his full vagary, and scribble to the World's End; without much danger of meeting with *Conclusive Evidence*, which he so dreads and hates; but certainly his Talent lies not in this crabbed way of *close Reason*. The rest of his Discourse here is imposing upon me that I make men incapable of *deserting* the Rules of *Christian Faith and Virtue*: tho' he knows in his Conscience I have told him the express-contrary above twenty times. All I pretend to in my Discourse from the Nature of a Rule, is, that *It follows*, it will secure the Followers of it from Error: But I no where ever said but *All Free Agents*, or all Mankind *may desert* those Rules; and, by deserting them, fall into *Error* and *Sin* too, unless supported by God's Grace. He asks *if it be possible for men to misunderstand a Certain Rule*; and I tell him, it is, in case it be not *Clear* as well as *Certain*: And * I have already shewn him that the Living Voice and Practice of the Church (*our Rule*) has so many ways of delivering *clearly* her own Sense, (or Christ's Doctrine) that the Generality cannot fail of understanding it right; however divers Souls to whom this Rule is not so well *apply'd*, remaining less cultivated by their own Carelessness or the Negligence of Pastours, may hap to misunderstand some Points. Nor *can they run into Error* so as to *fix* in it, while they think to follow the Rule: For, knowing they are to receive their Faith from the Church, they take not upon themselves to *judge of Faith*, as his *Sober Enquirers* do, whom he allows to judge of Scriptures Sense without any Certain Teacher to preserve them from Error and Heresy; whence such men became *fixt* and untractable, by fancying they have *Gods Word* on their side; while the others continue *docil* and capable of the Churches Instruction upon any occasion: And, when it comes to be discover'd (as

P. 81.

* Third
Cath. Letter
p. 6. 7. 8.

P. 81.

in likelihood it will be) by their expressions, that they have any Misconceit concerning Faith, it obliges them to seek to be better inform'd by the Church, their Mistress, whom they are willing to hear and believe; and the Church too becomes oblig'd to rectify their Mistakes, and instruct their Ignorance.

P. 32.

62. I have spoken formerly of his *Necessary* Points. Only I am to observe here that he avoids very carefully with *If's*, the telling us whether any of the highest Mysteries of our Faith be *necessary for Salvation*. But must we still be put off with that frigid Evasion that such sublime Points are as intelligible now at this distance from the time of the Apostles, tho' only couch't in a few words in a *Book*, as they were when spoke by those *Living Teachers*; who doubtless not only deliver'd their Sense in a few set words, but (such Points needing it) explain'd it and dilated upon it, to *settle it better*, and *sink an express conceit of it deeper into the minds of their Auditors*? Can it be imagin'd but that many of the People; and the Pastours especially, put their doubts, and askt them Questions, concerning the Points of Faith they had Preacht, and receiv'd pertinent Answers; none of which a Book could do. How ridiculous a pretence then is this! Yet this is his best shift: For, unless the Book have This or an Equivalent Virtue to make *Clear* its Sense, it cannot have the Plainness or Clearness requisite to a *Rule of Faith*. He contends that, if those Points be *necessary to Salvation*, they must be so *Plain that we may be Certain of our Duty to believe them*. Which retorts his Discourse upon himself; for if those two sublime Articles there spoken of be *Necessary* for the Salvation of the Generality (which cannot be deny'd without accusing the Primitive Church of *Tyranny* for casting those out of the Church who deny'd them) then they must be *Certain*, one way or other, that 'tis their Duty to believe

lieve them; and, since he does not think fit to say this Duty can be *Certainly* shewn them by the Letter of Scripture, it follows that this *Duty to believe them*, must be made *Certain* by the Testimony of the Church *delivering* them. 'Tis easy to be seen the whole force of his Discourse here is built on his *begging the Question*, that Scriptures Letter as understood by Private Judgments, is the Rule of Faith; and that it is *plain* in all Necessary Points: Which he ought not to do without shewing us first *which* Points are Necessary, at least those of the *Trinity*, and Godhead of *Christ*, if he think them so, and then proving his Rule is *Plain* in all such Points; and not still to *suppose, presume* upon, and *occur* to that which is yet *under Dispute, Ungranted, and Unprov'd*. Let me then mind him of one piece of Logick, which tho' it be not *Admirable*, yet 'tis Solid and never regarded by him. 'Tis this, that no Argument has any force upon another, but either by its being so *Evident* that he must forfeit his Reason to deny it, or *Granted* by his Adversary; so that he must either Argue from something *Clear of it self* or *made Clear* by *Proof*, or else argue *Ex concessis* from the Party's own Concession. By which Rule if all the Reasons he brings here were examin'd, it will manifestly appear he has not spoken one word of True Reason against me in his whole Answer. I do here Challenge him to shew me so much as *any One* Argument of his that has either of these Qualifications: and to encourage him to such a performance, if he can shew me any *One* such, I promise him to pass all the rest for valid and good. I end with desiring the considering Reader to reflect on the Drs Discourse here p. 82. and upon an exact review of it to determine whether Principles are not deeply laid here to make the *Socinians* and many other known Hereticks, Members of his Church, and to free them from Church Censurers. For if they find

not in Scripture that the Apostles Preacht the *Trinity* and *Godhead of Christ* in clear and Express terms, and with this Connotate, [*as necessary to Salvation*] they cannot be *Certain of their Duty to believe them*, the Consequences of which I need not dilate on. His own Church is more concern'd to look to his Tenets than I am.

P. 83.

63. He triumphs much that I grant *Some may be sav'd without the Knowledge of all Christ Taught*; He means, those Spiritual Points so often mention'd. But, if he knew how little advantage he gains by it, he would not think it worth his taking notice of. What may be done in an abstracted case is *one* thing; what, if they live in a Church, and hold Heresies contrary to Christ's and the Church's Doctrin, is *Another*. Some Catholick Divines treating of Faith do maintain that to hold *There is a God*, and that *He is a Rewarder and Punisher*, is *Simply enough* for *Salvation* if they live up to those Tenets; whence they conceive hopes that *Nebuchadnezzar* was sav'd tho' he was no *Jew*. But what's this to our case? Christ has left us a Body of Doctrin; and since he did nothing *Unnecessary* for the Salvation of *Mankind*, this being the End of his *Coming* and *Preaching*, each Point conduced to that End either immediately or by Consequence, whence by the way 'tis a Folly to expect the Apostles Taught such Points *as necessary to Salvation*, others *as not necessary*, since no Point was *Unnecessary* for the Salvation of *Mankind*; except when they said for Distinction, *Dico ego, non Christus*, or us'd some Equivalent expression. But to return, God has also settled a Church to conserve that Doctrin of Christ *Intire*. Whence, if any falls into Heresies contrary to that Doctrin by Misunderstanding Scripture's Letter in such passages, 'tis her Duty to cast them out of the Church and deliver them over to *Satan*, for their contumacious Pride in preferring their own Private Judgments before the Judgment of their Pastours,

Pastours, and the Church whom *God appointed to Teach Them*. Whence, I do assure him I do not hold that *any one* such *Privative Unbeliever* will ever be sav'd, tho' he holds some Points which, *of their own Nature* might suffice for *Salvation*. For, such a man believes nothing at all but upon his own *Self conceit*, and the very *Ground* of his *Faith*, let him prate of Scripture as much as he will, is *Spiritual Pride* ; which Vice alone is enough to *damm* him, even tho' he held all those Points of Christ's Faith to a little. Hence follows that either the Primitive Church (as hinted above) was very uncharitable in Excommunicating those who dissented from those High Articles ; Or else, the Rule of Faith must be so *Plain* and *Clear* that it must preserve those from Heresy who follow it, and render them *Inexcusable* who by *deserting* it do fall into the opposit *Heresies* : And, therefore, that we may bring our Discourse back to the Question, he must either prove his Rule of Faith thus Qualify'd, or '*Tis no Rule*. What follows to p. 85. is meer Drollery ; which gives all the seeming *Strength* to his *Weak* reasoning. Only he has a sting at *Transubstantiation*, which is a Topick of course in his Controversy. He thinks 'tis *Unnecessary* to the Church ; but the Church it seems thought it necessary to define it, in her Circumstances ; and I humbly conceive the necessary occasion of *defining* it was, because such as He Equivocated in the Tenet of the *Real Presence* ; and (according to the Drs late Distinction making *Not-Regulating* to be one sort of *Regulating*) would needs have the word [*Real*] to mean [*Not-Real*] whence it was judg'd expedient to put it past quibble by such a rigorously-express Definition. And I much fear this vexes the Drs Sacramentarian Spirit far more then *Transubstantiation* it self. I omit, that he has forgot here the Common distinction of what Points are necessary *Necessitate Medij*, and what *Necessitate Præcepti*. I suppose because

because this Later did not sute with his *Levelling* Principles, which set the *Church* and his *Rabble* on *even* Ground as to Matters of Faith.

P. 85.

64. I alledg'd that those Articles of the *Trinity* and *Christ's Godhead* were *Fundamentall Points*; and therefore if his Rule could not *Absolutely Ascertain* People of all sorts coming to Faith of those Articles, it could assure them of *None*, and so is *no Rule of Faith*. He runs quite away from the Points, and thinks he has done enough to say, *It is Absolutely Certain that God has reveal'd the Fundamentals of our Faith*. But the Question sticks still, Are you *Absolutely Certain* by your Rule that the *Trinity* and *Christ's Godhead* are *Christ's Doctrin* or signify'd with *Absolute Certainty* by Scripture's Letter? To this he says nothing, but shifts it off most Shamelessly to another thing. Let him set himself to do this which is *his Task*, and we will undertake to examin the Nature of his *Medium*, and show it *Inconclusive*. I alledg'd that there is *Experience*, by the *Socinians* taking the same way, that his *Medium* or way to be *Certain* of this is *not Certain*. He again turns off *Experience* that the way he takes is *not Certain*, to *Experience* of his *Inward Certainty*, or his *Inward Persuasion*. And asks briskly, *whether he or I know best?* A pleasant Gentleman! Why does he not confute all my Book by that Method? Does he think 'tis enough to show he is *Absolutely Certain* of the *Sense* of Scripture as to those Points, with barely saying, *he knows he is* thus *Certain* of it better than I? What wretched Shifts are these? In pursuance of this new Method of *Proving* and *Confuting* He asks again, *How comes Mr. S. to know we are not Certain when we say we are?* Because, when you are most highly *Concern'd*, and stood *Engag'd* by promise to show this *Absolute Certainty*, and are *Prest* to it *Vehemently*, and upon the brink of losing your *Credit* for not doing it, you still decline the showing you have any *such Certainty*

Ibid.

ty for the *Sense* of Scripture as to those Points. Still he asks, *Are not we Certain because some* (that is, the *Socinians*) are not *Certain*? No, Sir, not barely for that reason; but because the *Socinians* proceeding upon the *Same Rule*, are so far from being *Certain* of the *Sense* of Scripture as to those Points, that they esteem themselves *Certain* by the same Scripture of Hereticall Tenets Point-blank *Opposit* to those Points. Common Reason assures us no *End* can be compass'd without a *Means*, and therefore you can never show us *You are Certain*, till you show us you follow a better *Way*, rely on a firmer *Ground*, and *Guide* your selves by a *Clearer Light* to make you *Certain* of Scriptures *Sense* in those passages, than *They* do: which you *can never show*, and, as appears by your wriggling from that Point by the most untoward Shifts imaginable, *dare not Attempt*. But some are uncertain of *Orall Tradition*, nay *Censure* it: I do not know one man but holds and reverences it. It lies upon his *Credit* to name those who *Censure* it: For *Lominus* is a *Chimerical* name and signifies no body that he knows. But suppose *Some* did; yet it being an object of *Naturall Reason*, they and I in that case, could not proceed on the *Same Grounds* or *Reasons*; as his *Protestants* and the *Socinians* do upon the *Same Rule of Faith*.

65. I alledg'd that by his *Principles*, he could be no more *Certain* of his *Rule*, then he is of the *Truth* of the *Letter* of Scripture, in regard the *Truth* of the *Sense* of Scripture depends on the *Trueness* of the *Letter*. Does he deny this? Or does he show that without the *Care* of the *Church* preserving the *Letter Right* all along, he can have any *Such* *Certainty* of the *Letter*? He not so much as *Attempts* either. I alledg'd farther that he cannot be *thus Certain* of the *Right Letter* without having the same *Certainty* of the *Right Translation* or the *True Copy*; nor that any *Copy* is *True*, unless it be taken from the *First Originall*. Does he

he deny this? Or does he show that all these may not fail if the *Churches's Care* be set aside? No, neither. What Shift has he then? Why he says, 1. That some of us are *Concern'd to Answer this as well as He*. Not at all, for those who say that Part of Faith is *Contain'd* in Scripture, do not, for all that, say that their Faith is built on Scripture's Letter interpreted by any but the Church; nor do they say but the Church *without Scripture* could have ascertain'd them of their Faith. 2. He says, 'This strikes at the *Authentickness of the Vulgar Translation*. Not at all: For we have other Grounds to go upon which they have *Not*. 3. He skips, after bringing some words of mine for what they were never intended, from the *Translation*, to the *Canon* of Scripture, which are a Mile wide from one another, that so he may, however he speeds in all the rest, at least talk plausibly of the *Concurrent Testimony* for the *Canon*. In order to which, he stands up a Patron for those *Christian Churches* of his who thus *concurr'd*; and will not *condemn them as not truly Christian till their Cause be better heard and examin'd*. Yet 'tis Evident from his Second Letter to Mr. G. p. 25. that *some* of those Churches were *Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians*, condemn'd for Hereticks by most Antient General Councils; which he blames, it seems, for declaring so rashly against them, and reprieves his Friends from their *Censures* till a fairer Hearing. It had been happy for them, had Dr. St. presidid in those Councils, for he would doubtless have dealt with them very *kindly*, and have clapt them head and tail together with good Catholicks, into one Latitudinarian Bill of Comprehension. 5. I alledg'd that the same *Sense* in the heart of the Church *enabled* and *oblig'd* Her to *correct the Copy* when faulty in Texts containing Points of Faith; which, instead of shewing it Incompetent or Disagreeable to the Nature of things, he confutes most Learnedly by

P. 86.

P. 85. l. 25.
27. 28.

by pretending that *Atheists* and *Unbelievers* would be scandaliz'd at it. Whereas they would be much more scandaliz'd to see no Certain Means assign'd to preserve the Letter right from the beginning (the very first Originals being lost) and all left, (the *Churches* Care set a-part) to so many contingences of *Translating* and *Transferring*. 6. *We must prove it first to be impossible for the Sense of the Church to vary in any two Ages.* As if this had not been prov'd already, and never yet answer'd but by *Shuffles* and *Evasions*. 7. He frames a Plea for the *Arians* against the *Nicene Council* from my Principles: but very untowardly, for the *Arians* allow'd the *Copies*, and quoted Scripture as fast as *Catholicks* did, and yet Err'd most abominably; which makes against himself. Lastly, he tells us that 'tis a *pernicious* Principle, a *miserable Account*, &c. At which I wonder not. For, every thing is *miserable* and *pernicious* with him that makes the Church good for any thing. Yet he * could grant the Churches Testimony was needfull at first to abett the Truth of the Gospels; and she enjoy'd that Priviledge in * *St. Austins* time; and I wonder how she came to lose her Title to God's Gracious Providence and Assistance, or how she came to be disabled in the following ages to preserve the Letter uncorrupted in those Texts that contain'd known Points of Faith. It seems, *Translators*, and *Transcribers* (for the most part Mercenary) are *Sacred* with him, and admirable Preservers of the Letter; but, alas! the *Miserable Church* is good for nothing. I have * already told him why I hold Scriptures Letter *no Rule*, how 'tis sometimes call'd a *Rule* in an *improper* Sense, and why that Sense is *improper*, and his Friend Dr. *Tillotson* has told him what a *Rule of Faith* means * in our Controversies; but he never heeds either: but runs on here with frivolous descants upon an *ambiguous* word, and will needs take [*Rule*] in a Sense never meant, nor possible

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P. 88.

* Dr St's Sermon at Guild-Hall. p. 11. 12.

* Aug. in Epist. Fund.

* Third Cath. Letter p. 82. 83. 84

* Rule of Faith. p. 6. & p. 40.

sible to be meant in our circumstances. He's not satisfy'd with the *Care of the Council of Trent* in correcting the Copy. But let him remember I spoke there of *Texts of Inferiour Concern*, not of those that concern'd *Faith*. And why is he not satisfy'd? Did she not do her best in the present Circumstances? How will he prove it? Because *Clemens the 8th* recall'd and corrected the Bibles put out by *Sixtus the 5th* for an exact Edition. But, if both did their best, according to the Observations were made in their time, and the Light they had *then*, neither of them were to blame. But all this *Humane Diligence* amounts not to *Absolute Certainty as J. S. requires of us*: And is it not more reason I should require it of *him* than *be* of *me*, since he makes it (Scriptures Letter) the Proper Rule of Faith, which he knows I do not, and yet, which is pleasant he calls upon me aloud to *declare as much, and then he knows how to answer*. And now I know the true Reason why he has answer'd nothing hitherto, *viz.* because I had not declar'd what I had own'd in all my Books near a thousand times over. But we have lost our point by answering a multitude of Impertinent Cavills. 'Tis this. The Sense of Scripture cannot be *Absolutely Certain*, unless there be Absolute Certainty the *Letter* is *right*: Nor can there be Absolute Certainty the Letter is *right* even in Texts relating to Faith by his Principles, which deny this was perform'd by the *Churches Knowledge* of the Points of Faith, but by making out with Absolute Certainty how the Letter was by some *other Means* secur'd from being *wrong*. This he never attempts even in this very occasion when it lay upon him to do it; and, therefore, for all his empty flourishes he has said just nothing. Nor has shewn or defended that even the *Ground of his Faith*, Scriptures Letter, is *Absolutely Certain*. Besides his Discourse still beats upon this mistake that *We* do not *hold* the Letter *Absolutely Certain* in such concerning Texts;

Texts; whereas we only say *He* cannot prove it to be such by his *Principles*; and he makes our words good with not performing it, or so much as attempting it. Only he tells us for our comfort, that as to *Books, Copies, and Translations*, he has as high a *Certainty* as the thing is capable of; and then 'tis *Madness* to expect and require more. So that, tho' it happen that the *Certainty* be but a very *slight* one, his kind of Faithfull and Converts may take their choice whether they will be *Fools* if they will believe it, or *Madmen* if they will not. He tells us indeed faintly the Faith previous to Divine Faith, may have *Absolute Certainty*; but if it only may have it, it may not have it. In the mean time, what is all this voluntary *Saying*, to his *Proving* that he has really and indeed *Absolute Certainty* of those *Books, Copies, and Translations*. 'Tis his *Proofs* we lookt for, and not bare Narrations of his own weak *Tenets*, with which he thus puts us off continually.

66. But how strangely Insincere (if any such carriage could after so frequent use of it be *strange* in him) is the Dr to pretend we hold it is in any Churches Power to correct *Original Texts* because they contradict the *sense* of the present Church. These words he puts into *Italick Letter* as if they were *mine*; but he cites no place, and I do assure the Reader I have neither such *Words* nor *sense*. The first *Originals* are not extant, & so cannot be corrected; & those call'd *Originals*, which are already *acknowledg'd*, ought as little to be corrected as the other, in Texts belonging to *Faith*. All the Power we give the Church is to correct succeeding Copies upon occasion, in Texts relating to the Articles of our Faith, when they deviate from the Faith of the Church, or (which is the same) from former Copies allow'd by her universally.

67. I desir'd the Dr to satisfy us concerning the *Number of Books requisite to a Rule of Faith*, and how many will just serve the turn; as also whether some Book, for any

thing his Principles can assure us, were *not lost*. This
 lay upon him to *prove*, and this with Absolute Certainty,
 if he would have Scripture an *Inire* Rule of his Faith;
 P. 92. 93. How proves he it? Why, he makes me mightily *con-*
cern'd to lessen the Authority of the New Testament; and
 that *I charge the Christian Church with a Gross Neglect*. For
 all this Noise, he knows well enough that I agree with
 him, that *'tis not in the least probable the Churches should*
suffer any such Book dispers'd among them to be lost, nor do
 I so much as suppose they did. What I say is, that he
 who holds all Humane Authority *Fallible*, can never
 prove it *True* they deliver'd down *all*; unless he can con-
 vince the World that a *Fallible* Medium can prove a thing
True; which he cannot do without proving that *What*
may be False is True. Nor can he do *This*, without pro-
 ving *the same thing may be and not be at once*. I wish then
 he would set himself to work, and *prove* this abomina-
 ble *First Principle* to be *False*; For, otherwise, This alone
 will confute all the substantial parts of his Book, and
 convince every man of Common Sense, that his Grounds,
 confest by himself to be *Fallible*, can never make out, that
'tis True that he has either *Right Letter*, or *Right Sense* of
 Scripture, or that *no Book is lost*, &c. and so there's an
 End of his Problematical Faith. I must confess that to
 prove *First Principles False* is something difficult; but
 I have reduc'd the business to as narrow a compass as I
 can, that he may make *short work* of it. He recurs at pre-
 sent for want of some *Clear Proof to Gods Providence con-*
 P. 93: *cern'd in preserving Books written by Divine Inspiration*, Of
 which none doubts. But, why should not God's Provi-
 dence be as much concern'd in preserving his *Church* from
 Erring in Faith, that so both all those *Books*, their *Letters*
 and *Sense* might be kept right as far as was Necessary?
 Or, why was God's Providence the *Less* for making the
 Churches Care and Help the *Means* to preserve both the
 Books

Books and Letter of Scripture from suffering detriment? Lastly, why must his Providence be contin'd to only Translators and Transcribers?

68. Dr St. in his second Letter to Mr. G. p. 32. made the *Canon of the New Testament* the Rule of his Faith. To show the Inconsistency of his Tenets, and utterly overthrow his Pretence of that Rule, I * alludg'd, that *If the whole Canon be his Rule, then his Rule was deficient for some hundreds of years till the whole Canon was Collected and Acknowledg'd.* I press farther, that, since it must take up some time e're those severall Books were *Spread and accepted*, sometimes the Primitive Church had according to his Principles, but *Three quarters of their Faith, Half of their Faith, or less*, and so were but *Three-quarters or Half-Christians, according as the several pieces came by degrees to be Universally accepted.* For no man of Sense can doubt but that it cost *some time* e're the Churches, so diffus'd, heard of all those Books, and *much more* e're they could be *perfectly satisfy'd* of the Universal Testimony of the Church *Ascertaining* them to have been writ by men *Divinely inspir'd*; in regard it was of most *Dangerous Consequence* to accept that for *God's Word*, which was not beyond all doubt *such*. So that we may with reason imagin that some Churches had at first but *Two or Three Books* of Scripture, others but *Four or Five* that were *well attest-ed* or could be *rely'd on* in such a *High Concern*. Add, that there were divers false Gospels and Spacious Books given out under the names of having the Apostles or Apostolical Men for their Authors; which must have redoubled their care, and made them backward to receive any that were not *Authentick*, which would take up *still more time* to examin thoroughly. To press my Argument still more home, I urg'd that perhaps, according to him, they had *no Faith at all* during that *long Interval*; because wanting *other Books* or sufficient warrant

* First Cath.
Letter, p. 53.
59.

* Second Letter to Mr G.
P. 31.

P. 95.

to rely on them, they, by consequence wanted a Multitude of other Texts, with which they might Compare those they already had, which is one part of his Method to find true Faith in Scripture. To show more the Inconsonancy of his Doctrine, I noted that, notwithstanding all this, * he declar'd that he lookt upon the *Primitive Church* tho' so ill furnish'd with his Rule, as on the *Best Arbitrator between us in all our Controversies about the Sense of the doubtfull* (that is Controverted) *places of Scripture.* Now, one would verily think this pressing Discourse, following the Point in Question so Close and pursuing it so Home, were exceedingly worth his while to Answer, if he could; since it toucht his Rule and his Cause to the quick. Now lets see what he says in their Defence. The Substance of his Answer (for all the rest is impertinent) is a most doughty and most weighty word [It] If God (says he) hath so Abundantly provided for his Church that there may be a full Revelation of all Points of Faith in the rest, then the disputing the Authority of such an Epistle (meaning that to the Hebrews) doth not derogate from the Compleatness of the Rule of Faith. What's become of his Sincerity and Morall Honesty, which he so profess't to Love? Did I speak of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Did not I, not only speak of but most Expressly discourse all along of those many or most Books of Scripture, not Universally known and accepted at the very first, but by degrees spreading and gaining in Process of Time the Credit of being Authentick? Does not my Discourse that by his Principles [The Primitive Church had but Three quarters of her Faith, half her Faith, or less] barr this Shamming Pretence that I speak only of that Epistle? Or does he think I meant that that single Epistle was half or three quarters of the Canon of Scripture? And now, Reader, I beg thy leave to insist here upon this Prevarication as an instance of one great Part of his Method in Confuting. He picks out

out a word or two which may best serve him to slip away from the Point; and turn it to quite another business, but leaves the whole Strefs and full import of the Argument *Unanswer'd*. It were tedious still to reflect how oft he has done thus in this pretended Reply to my *Catholique Letters*: But, whoever compares his severall Answers to the respective places he pretends to speak to, will see how dull and insignificant they are; tho' if he be read *alone*, especially with an Implicit Belief of his dealing fairly, they look very jolly and brisk. However to divert the Readers Eye he is even with me in another Point. I said the *accepting or not accepting Books* whether in the *Latin or Greek Churches* was an *Act of Prudence Antecedent to the Judgment or Determination of any Church*, and so could not make or marr the *Latin Church's Infallibility in her Judgment or Decrees*. He falls into a gross mistake of the word [*Antecedent*] and erects a Trophy of Victory upon his own Errour. To clear which 'tis to be observed that our Divines admit *Prudentiall Considerations* in any Church, even tho' held *Infallible*, *Previous* to her Decrees, & yet do not hold that Church is *Infallible* in those Acts of Prudence which are thus *Antecedent*. Now, tho' the whole *Series* of my Discourse there shows clearly that I spoke of an *Antecedency* in the Course of *Humane Actions*, or of a *Prudentiall Deliberation* Antecedent to an *Absolute Decision*; he turns it to an *Antecedency in Chronology*, or of more *Antient Writers*; and when he has apply'd that word to a wrong matter he has the Vanity to insult. But, he says, I say not a Syllable to his proving hence the *Roman Church was not then believ'd Infallible*. Surely he never consider'd what he pretends to Answer; for by saying it was not only an *Act of Prudence Antecedent to any Degree*, I show there was no occasion to show what was then believ'd of her *Infallibility* or not believ'd. Again, since the Certainty of that Epistles being writ

Third Cath.
Letter. p. 57.

P. 96.

writ by *St. Paul* depended on Testimony, other Churches might perhaps know that better for some time than She. But, the world is, he was preparing for *New Questions*, to avoid the danger in keeping to the *True one*. For he knew the *Infallibility* of the Church we are here defending, is that of *Tradition* in delivering down the *Doctrin of Christ*; and he does not, sure, judge it a Point of Christ's Doctrin that the Epistle to the *Hebrems* was writ by *S. Paul*. Add, that when the Church of *Rome* did *Decree* any thing at all in that matter, it was for the *Reception* of that Epistle; in doing which he will not, I hope, say she *Err'd*. So that our great Dr is out in every particular in which he shows such Confidence, or rather he is to talk very *Confidently* whenever he is out, that he may not seem *not to be out*.

P. 97.

69. He puts my Objection against his *Univerfall Consent*, of the Testimonies of *Marcion, Ebion, Valentinus and Cerinthus*, who (as he makes me say) *rejected the Canon of the New Testament*; and then asks, *Could any man but J. S. make such an Objection as this?* And, I may, I hope, ask another Question; *Could any Man but Dr St. put such a Gull upon his Adversary and the Reader too?* Now, if I us'd such words as [*who rejected the Canon of the New Testament*] I spoke *Nonsense*; for those Hereticks were dead long before that Canon was settled: But if I did not, then he has abus'd me and our Readers too, and done no great right to himself. Let Eye-sight decide it. In my Third Catholick Letter. p. 59. (the place he cites) line 11. 12. my express words are, *The Consent of all your Christian Churches for Scripture*; and he instead of [*Scripture*] puts down as my words [*The Canon of the New Testament.*] I can compassionate *Humane Oversight* (for it may hap possibly tho' it can never knowingly to be my own Case) and not too severely impute a mistake in altering my *Words*, and by them my *Sense*: Yet I must needs say that to put those

those wrong words in the Italick Letter to breed a more perfect Conceit they were *mine*, and quote the very page in the Margent where no such words were found, to make me speak Nonsense, looks a little Scurvily; especially, because when men have their Eyes upon the *very Page*, as he had, they have an easy and obvious direction to the *words* too. But, why do I make such a *Spitefull Reflexion* on him as to call them *his Christian Churches*? Because he would needs allow other Sects, as perfectly Hereticall as they were to be [* *Christian Churches*] tho' he was put upon it to give them a distinct Character; and here again he grants them to be *parts of the Christian Church*, tho' they be *cut off* by Lawfull Authority from the body of Christianity. Next, that I may speak my conscience, because I fear, by many passages in his Books, by his ill-laid Principles, and the very *grain* of his Doctrin and discourses, he judges *all* to be good *Christians* who profess to ground their Faith on *Scripture*, let them hold as many Heresies as they will. And, lastly, for his fierce anger here against me for calling those Hereticks, *viz.* The *Arians, Nestorians, &c.* which have been Condemn'd by Generall Councils, (for I concern not my self with his *Greeks* or *Abyssins* or any others) *Excrementitious Outcasts*, and that I *sling such dirt in the face of so many Christian Churches*. And is not this to cry, *Hail fellow, well met?* But *my Cause* (he says) *is desperate*, because I call such men *Knights of the Post*. Yet he knows the Fathers oft complain of Hereticks for *corrupting the Scripture*; and the Testimony of the Churches *Truly Christian* was *Absolutely Certain*, without calling in so needlessly *Blasted Witnesses*. Moreover I told him that the Universal Testimony he produc't did attest the *Books*, but it must attest the *Chapter* and *Verse* too to be *Right*, nay *each Significant Word in the Verse*, otherwise the Scripture could not assure him *Absolutely* of his Faith. Can he deny this?

* Dr St's Second Letter to Mr G.
Ps 24. 25.

P. 98.

P. 102.

this? If the *Chapter* or *Verses* he cites be not *True Scripture*, or if any material *Word* in the *Verses* be alter'd can he securely build his *Faith* on it? What says he to this? Does he *deny* it, or show that *His* Grounds reach home to prove these particular *Texts* or *Words* to be *right*, by *Universall* Testimony or any other *Medium*? Neither of them is his Concern: What does he then? Why he complains how *hardly* we are satisfy'd about the *Certainty* of *Scripture* and that we are *Incurable Scepticks*. Sure he dreams. *We* are Satisfy'd well enough; but his Vexation is that we are not satisfy'd of it by *his Principles*; and how should we; if, when it was his *Cue* to satisfy us, he will never be brought to go seriously about it? And why must we be *Scepticks*; when as we both *hold* the Rectitude of the Letter our selves in *Texts* relating to *Faith*, and *Assign* a way to secure it *Absolutely*, which he *cannot*? Must all Men necessarily be *Scepticks* who allow not his *No-way* of doing this, tho' they *propose* and *Maintain* a certain way that *can do it*? This is a strange way of *Confusing*. He says *There are different Copies in all Parts to examine and Compare*. 'Tis these very Copies that are in *Question*, whether they give *Absolute Certainty* of every *Verses* or material *Word* in the Letter of *Scripture*, and we expected he should have shown *how* they did so, and not barely *name* them, and say there are such things. But the main Point is, Must those who are looking for *Faith* run to all *parts* of the *World*, and *examine* and *Compare* all the Copies e're they embrace any *Faith*? This looks like a *Jest*: Yet 'tis a sad, tho' a mad Truth by his Principles. For without knowing *this*, *Scripture* cannot be their Rule; and hee'll allow no way to come to *Faith* but by *Scripture*; So that, for any Assurance he can give them, (even of his *Necessary* Points) they must e'n be content to stay at home, and live and dye without any *Faith* at all. He ends. *And Thus I have answer'd all the*

the Objections I have Met with in J. S. against our Rule of Faith. Here are two Emphaticall words [*Thus*] and [*Met*] of which the word *Thus* has such a pregnant Signification and teems with so many indirect wiles and Stratagems that it would be an ingratefull task to recount them; and the word [*Met*] is as Significant as the other. For how should he *Meet* those that lay *in the way*, while he perpetually *runs out of the Way*.

S E C T. IV.

How solidly Dr. St. Answers our Arguments for the Infallibility of Tradition.

70. **B**UT now he exerts his *Reasoning* Faculty, which he does seldom, & will answer Mr G's Argument for the *Infallibility of Oral and Practicall Tradition*. With what success we shall see anon. But, first he will clear his bad *Logick* for letting the Argument stand yet in its full force, and falling very manfully to Combat the Conclusion: and tho' Common Sense tells every man this is not to *Answer* but to *Argue*, yet he will have *Arguing* to be *Answering* for all that. 'Tis his Interest to do it solidly, for he has all the World, who in their Disputes follow the contrary Method, to confute. His main reason to prove that *Arguing* is a good way to *Answer* is because the Argument attempts to prove a thing *Impossible*, and that 'tis *contrary to Sense and Experience* to say the *Latin* and *Greek Churches* do not differ in what they receive upon Tradition; and so the same Answer that *Diogenes* gave to *Zeno's Argument against Motion by Walking*, will serve the turn. Let's examin this parallel, in which consists the substance of his Defence of his bad *Logick*. Does all the World see that the Generality of

P. 180.

P. 101.

the *Greek Church* proceed upon Tradition in what they differ from the *Latin* as certainly and evidently as they see there is *Motion*? Have not I produc't in my *First Catholick Letter*, p. 35. reasons enow to shew him how disputable this point is, none of which he so much as mentions? Did not I there p. 12. quote him out of his own book *Peter Lombard*, saying, that the *Difference between the Greeks and Latins is in Words and not in Sense*? Nay, *Thomas a Jesu, Azorius, &c.* who were of the same Judgment? And could not these Learned men see a thing manifest to *Sense and Experience*? Our point then is nothing like that of denying Motion, nor is it *contrary to Sense and Experience*, but such as bears a Dispute amongst intelligent Men and Great Schollars, and therefore, even by the Drs own Discourse, an *Argument or Instance*, brought against the *Conclusion* was no *Answer* to the *Premises* of the Argument brought by Mr. G. and so all the Division he runs upon it here is perfectly frivolous. Nor was Mr G. oblig'd either to *grant* or *deny* the Greek Church had *Err'd*, but was to insist on an Answer to his Argument; because the Dr had playd foul play, in attacking his *Conclusion* when he was to *answer* his *Proof*; which if admitted, no Discourse could possibly proceed. For, let us suppose Dr. St. had been to *argue*, and had brought this *Instance* of the Greek Church; would he have thought it fair that Mr G. when he was to *answer* it, should have brought the Argument he made use of in the Conference, and have bid him prove that two Churches following Tradition differ'd in Faith, *notwithstanding* his Demonstration that they could not? Or, would it be held a competent Answer to his late Book against the *Council of Trent*, to bid him prove it had not follow'd Tradition, *notwithstanding* all that a multitude of Learned Catholick Authors had writ to the contrary? I took heart then indeed, as he says, seeing the

the Dr so *Nonplust*, but 'tis his own fiction that I *resolv'd* P. 101.
to grapple with his Instance, it being impertinent to do it
in those circumstances, and so he may thank himself if
he were *disappointed*. I was ty'd to the known Laws of
Dispute, and not bound to dance after his Pipe when
he strays from all the Clearest Methods of *Reasoning*. I
objected that himself had defended the *Greek Church*
from *Erring* in his *Rational Account*; which spoils his
own Instance of a Church *going upon Tradition and Erring*.
He calls this *Trifling*, and says *the Dispute was about Mr G's*
Argument. Yes; but these words were not brought to
abet his Agreement, but expressly to shew the Drs In-
consonancy to himself, and his Unconscienciousness in
arguing from the *Greek Churches Erring*; whereas it was
his *Opinion* it did *not Err*. And tho' Mr G's Answer may
be pretended not to be so pat to the particular Demand,
yet it was apposit to the main Point that no Church did
at once *adhere* to Tradition and *Err* at the same time. For P. 103.
which I gave my reason, because if each Successive Gene-
ration follow'd their Fathers Tradition from the begin-
ning, the *last* Son must believe as the *first* did. This was
too hot to handle, and so 'tis answer'd with *Good Night* P. 104.
to the Greek Church; which is Learned beyond expres-
sion. Lastly, upon my saying, *He might as well have in-*
stanc't in the Latin Church it self, without running so far as
Greece; he takes hence an occasion to accept of the *Chal-*
lenge, tho' it did not look like one, being only spoke oc-
casional; and threatens us not with a bare instance but
a whole Book against us: He may use his pleasure; tho'
I must tell him it looks but *cowardly* to threaten when
he's *running away* from his business, undertaken and not
yet perform'd; and leaving the *Absolute Certainty* of his
poor destitute *Faith* in the Jews. One would think it had
been the more Compendious Way to overthrow our
Cause, to answer five or six lines if he could have done it.
But

But, he had a mind to be at another Work more suitable to his Quoting *Genius*, and hop'd to draw us after him from a Conclusive and short way of Discourſing to an Endleſs one, of answering every frivolous miſunderſtood or miſapply'd Citation.

T. 104.

71. But now he will ſhew us how 'tis *Poſſible to adhere to Tradition & yet err*. A hard Task, if apply'd to our buſineſs! For, ſince *to adhere to Tradition* is ſtill *to believe what was deliver'd*, to ſhew that thoſe who *adhere to Tradition* do *err*, is to ſhew that they who ſtill believ'd the ſame *Chriſt* taught did *not* believe the ſame *Chriſt* taught. A Point ſo Evident that his Reſpecter could not but grant it. Yet let the Dr alone; I dare hold a good wager on his ſide that he can by his confuting *Method* & his *Logick* prove direct Contradiſtions to be True without any difficulty, or, as he calls it here, with an *Eaſy Illuſtration*. He begins with two Senſes of *Adhering to Tradition*. One of *adhering to it as the Rule and Means of conveying matters of Faith*. The other for *adhering to the very Doctrin taught at firſt and truly convey'd down ſince by Tradition*. That is, there are two ſorts of *Tradition* or *Delivery*; One is *Tradition*, the Other is not *Tradition* or *Delivery*, but the *Points deliver'd*. Parallel to this is his Diſtinction of *Traditionary Chriſtians*. To what purpoſe is it, to talk *Senſe* to a man who is reſolv'd to run ſtill ſo wildly into *Nonſenſe*? Do but ſee, good Reader, with what care I had foreſtall'd this very Abſurd Diſtinction in my *Third Catholick Letter*, p. 4. 5. 9. 12. and ſhew'd how he had deform'd *Tradition* into all the untoward *Senſes* man's wit could invent, by making it now ſignify *Articles*, now *Power*, now *Points deliver'd*; yet to convince the World that he *cannot* or rather *muſt not* ſpeak *Senſe*, he's at the ſame work again as briskly as ever: And good reaſon: *Contradiſtions* are better Friends to him than Principles: for nothing more *confounds* the Reader, which is all he looks after; and to *confound* him with

with a shew of *Distinguishing*, which Nature intended for a way to *clear* things, does it with a better grace. The same work he makes with the word [*Traditionary*] and, tho' he were told what we meant by it *First Letter*, p. 8. and *Second Letter*, p. 52. yet 'tis never acknowledg'd, but he still runs his *Division* upon it, as if it were some Ambiguous or Mysterious Word, till he has put the whole Tenour of the Discourse into *Confusion*. Once more I tell him, and desire the Reader to witness it, that he already knows what we distinctly mean by those words: and, if he will not acknowledge it and speak to the Sense we give it upon our assurance that we *never took* them, nor ever will take them *otherwise*, he speaks not to *me*, nor gives a word of *Answer*; but, as baffled men use, runs for shelter to meer Brabbles and Impertinencies.

72. And *Now* that is, after he had laid Contradictions for his Principles, he comes to give a *Clear and distinct Answer to our Demonstration of the Infallibility of Tradition*. And no doubt by Virtue of such Grounds he will do wonders. Mr. G's discourse was distinguish'd by me in my *First Letter* p. 8. 9. into four parts or Propositions; of which, the First is, that *All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did Yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour*. Now he knows that by *Tradition* we mean an *Immediate Delivery*, and this from day to day; for it would not be *Immediate* if it were at all *Interrupted*; and by [*Traditionary*] those who follow'd this Rule of *Immediate Delivery* and do *Actually* believe the say to day which they did yesterday; and that, if they do not this, they desert this *Tradition* by *Interrupting* *Immediate Delivery*, and so cease to be *Traditionary Christians*. All this he already knows for it has been told him over and over: Whence he cannot but *know*, tho' he thinks not fit to *Acknowledge* it, that the Proposition is *Self-Evident*, and plainly amounts to this, that *They*
who

who believe still the same do still believe the Same ; and the word [*Traditionary*] was only made use of to express those Persons in *one* word, because it had been tedious still to use so *Many*. Could any man but this Gentleman undertake to combat a Proposition so formally, which is in *Sense* Identicall and *Self-Evident* ? I took him to be one who would own his *Humane Nature* which obliges every man to assent to such *Clearest Truths*, and so vainly hop'd he had nothing to say to it. But, as he says very true, *I was mistaken: for he has many things to say to lay open the Notorious Fallacy of it in every Clause. How? Every Clause? Why, there's but one Clause in the Whole ; for the adjoyn'd words [and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour] are the most Essentiall part of it, and distinguish Christian Tradition from that of Hereticall Traditions begun since Christ's time. So that the Dr makes account that One signifies Many. This is but an ill Beginning ; and I do assure the Reader all the rest is not a jot Wiser. But, now come the Notorious Fallacies. Why did I not say that All Christians are Traditionary ? Or that All Christians have gone upon this Principle? Because many are call'd Christians especially by him, who have deserted this Principle, and so have no Title to be call'd Traditionary: But principally, because if we speak of True Christians, that was the thing to be Concluded; for those men are not such, who Disacknowledge a Way of knowing Christ's Doctrine, which is prov'd to give them Absolute Certainty of it. So that it is a Notorious Fallacy, according to Dr-S's new Logick, not to make the Conclusion the very First Proposition of an Argument; and the Fallacy lies in judging that the Last thing should not be the First. Hitherto then this most Learned Logician has not taken one step, without stumbling into a manifest Contradiction. One Single Clause is Many Clauses. Self-Evident Propositions are Notoriously Fallacious. Words, whose meaning have been particularly*

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particularly explain'd to him over and over, and so *can* have but *one* Sense as we speak of them, may have *Many* Senses: *Adhering to* and *following* Tradition is *not adhering* to it and *not following* it, and the *Conclusion* or *End* of an Argument is to be the *Beginning* of it, or the *Proof* is to be the Thing *Proved*. Nor is this any wonder: for 'tis but fit that *Self-Evident* Truths should only be oppos'd by *Self-Evident Contradictions*.

73. After these Noble Performances, he falls into his old track of *Dividing* and *Subdividing*, he talks of *Evidence from the Word of God*, from the *Guides of the Church*, he runs to *Infallibly* holding to Tradition, (not spoke of *Yet*, but *following* in the Argument) he tells us they may go upon another Rule &c. Anticipating thus all the following discourse, and complaining all is not prov'd at once, when as we are as yet but at the very first words of the Proof. There is no End of the Faults and Failings of these Sinfull *self-Evident Truths*; Fallshoods and *Contradictions* are Saints to 'em: It supposes falsely (he says) that the Change in Faith must be so sudden and Remarkable, whereas it was Gradual, and so to pitch upon such a Precise and Narrow Compass of time is very Unreasonable. Lastly, to Illustrate and compleat his Answer with an Instance, he tells us, that by the same Method one may demonstrate it to be Impossible that any Language should be Chang'd. By which we may gather that Dr St's Incomparable Skill in Philosophy, and deep Inspection into the Natures of Things, makes account that Truths are of the same Nature with Quantitative Things or Bodies. All Corporeall Motions, amongst the rest Sounds or Speaking, have a Thousand Indeterminate Degrees between any two determinate Points. Does he think 'tis so with Truths and Fallshoods? Or does he imagin the Thoughts of the Christian World could take a Walk of two or three Hundred years between *Is* and *Is not*? Did he never hear that Truths consist

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first in an Indivisible, that he thus compares them to *Quantitative* or *Divisible* Natures, and judges the Comparison so apposit? Putting then once the true Notion of the Points in the Head and Heart of the Christian Church, (and, if they were never there the Apostles lost their labour) the *least* Change in it must change the *Point*. Did he never reflect why a *Tenet* is Metaphorically call'd a *Point*? And that 'tis because a *Point* is *Indivisible*? The putting in the Proposition [*to day and Yesterday*] is to express the *Immediateness* of Tradition. Others, amongst the rest the *Council of Trent*, and many of the Fathers, particularly St. *Athanasius*, call it [*Delivering down by Hands*] and the hands of the *Children* must be *Immediate* to the hands of their *Fathers*, else the one could not receive what the other *Delivers*. Nor do I, or any man living, know how, if the whole Church should be in an Error but *one day*, by deserting the *Rule of Faith*, they should ever retrieve *True Faith* again, having forsaken the only way to it. Of such consequence it is that the Means of conveying down Christ's Faith be *Immediate*, even *from day to day*. And thus Dr *St.* has begun to answer Mr *G's* Demonstration, by keeping such a huge pother about a Proposition *Evident by its own Light*, and pretending more faults in it than even a wise man could have shown in the *Arantest Falshood*. But he has not done with it yet: the most Essentiall part of it remains yet behind; [*And so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour*] Now the Proposition speaks of *Believing the same* all that while; and he confutes it with talking of *Claiming* and *Pretending* to follow it. Whence, since to *believe the same* that was deliver'd, is *Actually following* Tradition, his distinguishing Talent has afforded us two sorts of *following* Tradition: One which is *really* and *indeed following* it, the other is *only pretending* to follow it and not doing so; that is, there is one sort of *believing the same* or of *following* Tradition, which

is *not-following* of it, which is still of the same Learned Strain.

74. The Second Proposition is [*And if they follow this Rule they can never Err in Faith*] what says he to this ? If they follow this Rule, that is, believe the same from Christ's time that was taught at first, do not they believe the same Christ Taught ! One would verily think that this is as Evident as 'tis that, to believe the same is to believe the same. True, 'tis so, and therefore 'tis with him *Self-Evidently a meer Fallacy*. Certainly never was any Mortall Man such an Enemy to *Common Sense*. But 'tis his constant humour to talk big when he's at a perfect *Nonplus*. Well, but how proves he 'tis a *meer Fallacy*. Why 1. He grants that *those who believe Christ's Doctrine cannot Err*. And is not this a rare Answer ? We both grant that Christ's Doctrine is *True*, and consequently that who hold it cannot *Err*: All this is *Presuppos'd* to our Question, and so is *no part* of it. But our Point is how we shall know assuredly what is Christ's Doctrine ? Or by what Means shall we come at it ? 2. He says, They might mistake in this Rule ; It has been shown him, *Third Cath. Letter*, p. 6, 7. 8. 9. and in many other places upon occasion, that they could not mistake in this Rule ; & he never takes notice of it in his whole Answer, and yet has the Confidence to object it afresh. 3. He says, They might follow another Rule. This too has been prov'd against him, nay 'tis here prov'd in the Fourth Proposition of this very Argument ; for by proving they could not innovate in Faith, 'tis prov'd they (that is the *Body* or *Universality*) could not desert Tradition. But what a shift is the Dr put to ? Do we contend here they could follow no other ? All the Proposition pretends to is, that *If they follow this Rule they cannot err in Faith*. What says he to this ? Can they, or can they not ? If they cannot, then the Rule is a good Rule, which is all we labour to prove here, the rest

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is prov'd in the Fourth Proposition. And if they *can err*, tho' following it then, since to follow it, is *still to believe the same*, the Dr must say that the *same* Faith tho' still convey'd down the *same* is not the *same* it self was at first; which is a direct Contradiction. Not one single word of Answer then to the Proposition has he given us, only he affirms stoutly 'tis *Fallacious* (a very *Cheap* Answer to any Argument that is too crabbed and difficult) but he cannot for his heart tell where the Fallacy lies. The Conclusion is *naught*, that he's *resolv'd* on, but he has nothing that is pertinent to say to the *Premisses* or *Proof*. Yet, something he must say for a *shew*; and, so, *he will shew some other ways that Errours might come in*. And perhaps I can shew him twenty more; but, still, what's this to the Point? Can Errours in Faith come in while men follow *this Rule* of Tradition, that is while they continue to *believe the same* that was still taught immediately before, and this ever since Christs time? This is our only business.

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75. Since I must now run out of the way after our Straggling Disputant, I desire first the Reader would remark, that the Proposition he is now answering is this, [*If they follow this Rule (viz. Tradition) they can never err in Faith*;] as also that by [*Tradition*] is meant the *Publick Testimony* of the Church of— *what was deliver'd as Christs Doctrine*. His first particular way of introducing *Errours*, is, *by the Authority of False Teachers*. But was Tradition follow'd, while they follow'd their *Authority*? If it was, then the Christian Church was a *False Teacher*, and her Publick Testimony attested false Doctrine to be *Christs*; which if he holds, let him speak out, and see how all Christians will detest him. If Tradition was *not follow'd* but *deserted* when men were led by False Teachers, what's this to us? or whom does it oppose? For 'tis plainly to abet *Tradition*, to say that none could follow

Ibid.

follow *False Teachers*, but they must at the same time desert *It*. 'Tis hard to conjecture then what he meant by alledging *de Molinos* unless it were to make his Friend Dr *Burnets* Book concerning *Molinos* sell. 'Tis no news that *False Teachers* may introduce *Errours*; and that that man pretended the *Publick Testimony* of the Church, or that his whimsies were *Christ's Doctrin* deliver'd down from the beginning, is both unheard of and Incredible. His Second way of *introducing Errours*, is by *Enthusiasm*. Very well. Did the *Testimony* of the Christian Church tell them that *Enthusiasm* was *Christ's Doctrin*? If he says it *did*, he makes the whole Christian Church in some Age to have been a pack of hare-brain'd *Enthusiasts*. If it did not, then 'tis an honour to *Tradition* that they deserted it when they fell into that *Spiritual Madness*. His Third way is by a *pretence to a more secret Tradition*. But was this *pretence to a Secret Tradition* a *pretending to follow the Publick Tradition of the Church*? If it was not, it opposes not *our Tradition* but credits it. And if he says it was, then he makes what's *Secret* to be *Publick*, which is a *Contradiction*; and the very alledging this makes him in some manner *Guilty* of that old *Failing* of his. His Fourth is, *Differences among Church-Guides about the Sense of Scripture and Tradition*. I have * already shewn him that it was impossible the *Generality*, especially of *Pastours*, should not know the *Sense of Tradition*; and, as for some *Church Guides* differing about the *Sense of Scripture*, it was equally impossible they should Err in Faith, as long as they interpreted *Scripture* by the Rule of the *Church's Tradition*; and, when they once left that Rule, instead of being any longer *Church-Guides*, they became generally if they were any thing, *Eminent Ringleaders of Heretical Sects*; which gives a high repute to *our Tradition*, even by their *erring* when they deserted it. His Fifth way how *Errour* might come

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* Third
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P. 6. 7. 8. 13.

come in, is too great a Veneration to some particular Teachers— which made their Disciples despise Tradition in comparison of their Notions. And were those men Followers of Tradition who despis'd it? His 6th is, *By Compliance with some Gentil Superstitions, &c.* But did Tradition or the Church's Testimony deliver down to them these Heathenish Superstitions for *Christs Doctrin*? Or rather, would it not have preserv'd men from them, had nothing else been attended to but *that Rule*? His 7th and last is by *Implicit Faith*, that is, that when a man had found a Faithfull Guide to direct him, he should submit himself to be Guided by him in things in which he could not guide himself. A very dangerous case indeed! But the Antidote to this malicious suggestion is, that the same Church that they believ'd, condemn'd all *New Revelations*, and adher'd only to what was deliver'd. He could have added an Eighth way how Errours in Faith come in, had he pleas'd, and That too such a one, as had done a thousand times greater mischief than all the rest put together; viz. *Private Interpretations of Scripture*; which every man knows has been the source of all the Heresies since Christ's time. But this being the *sole Ground of his Faith*, it was not his Interest to let his Readers know it had been the *Ground of all Heresy*.

76. But what's all this to the Point? Or how is the Demonstration *lost* if many men err'd upon divers other accounts so none err'd while they follow'd Tradition? Unless he proves this, he *establishes* our Demonstrations by his shewing how multitudes err'd who were led by *other* Motives and by his not being able to produce so much as *one* Instance of any that err'd by adhering to *It*. What Noise and Triumph should we have had, could he have alledg'd so many Heretiicks sprung up by grounding their opinions on mistaken Tradition, as 'tis known have arisen by grounding their wicked

wicked Tenets on misunderstood *Scripture*? But alas! tho' *that* were exceedingly to his purpose, not one such Instance could he bring. He talks a little faintly of the *Arians, Pelagians, Nestorians, &c. not disowning Tradition.* But does he hope to persuade any man of Sense those Upstarts durst ever go about to put out the eyes of the World by pretending their Heresies were *deliver'd down as Christs Doctrin* by the *Publick Testimony of the Church* in their days, or out-face the present Church that *she* her self had *taught* them what she knew *themselves* had newly *invented*? Or would she have *condemn'd* them had they spoke *her thoughts* or follow'd *her Doctrin*? With what Sense can any of this be imagin'd? The Tradition then which they went upon was Citations of some former Authors, which they misunderstood, (the very Method Dr St. and his fellow-Quoters take now a-days) or else the Judgment of a few Foregoers; of whom some might speak ambiguously, others perhaps hanker'd after their Heresy. 'Tis very hard to guess what Dr St. would be at in alledging so many ways how Error might be introduc't. That it *might* come in, and by *Various* ways no man doubts. That it came in meerly by following Tradition or the Churches Testimony he says not. That particular Multitudes might be seduc't by *deserting* Tradition, is equally granted, and needs no Proof. And that it came in tho' Men *Adher'd* to Tradition (which was the true Point) he goes not about to prove nor seems so much as to think of. Besides most of the *Ways* he assigns if not all, are so many *Desertions* of Tradition which highly conduces to *Strengthen* our Argument; while he *impugns* it: Yet surely that could not be his Intention neither. I cannot imagin then what all these seven Formall Heads are brought for, but to make a *Show* of none knows what. Sometimes, I incline to think he is combating the Fourth Proposition, proving
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the Body of *Traditionary Christians* could not innovate in Faith but either through forgetfulness or Malice. And yet I cannot fix upon this neither; both because he names not these two defects before he shows us his *other* ways of *Erring*; as also because we are not come as yet to the Fourth Proposition where *all* the *Sirefs* lay, but have spent all our time in confuting the First and Second, which were *Self-Evident*. But, if that be his meaning as he intimates p. 112. to escape replying to the Fourth Proposition, then let him know that, whatever his unfound Principles say, whoever *deserts* the *Testimony* of God's Church whether by the *Authority*, (or rather *No-Authority*) of *False Teachers*; or, by *Enthusiasm*, the root of which is *Spiritual Pride*; or, by following *secret Traditions* against the *Publick Authority* of the Church; or, by adhering to a *Sense of Scripture* contrary to what *Tradition* allows; or by *too great a Veneration* to some particular *Teachers*; or by *Compliance with Heathenish Superstitions*; or, by whatever other Motive, is Guilty before God of a Heinous Sin, and it must spring from some degree of *Malicious* or *Bad* disposition in his heart. For he cannot but see that himself or his Leader breaks the Order of the World by disobeying, rising against and preferring himself before those whom God had set over him to feed, direct, instruct and Govern him. Of which Order, and of the Goods coming by it, and the Mischiefs which attend the Violating it, none of Common Sense, whom some by-affection has not blinded, can possibly be Ignorant.

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77. He concludes with these words [*If then Errors might come into the Church all these Ways; What a vain thing it is to pretend that Orall Tradition will keep from any possibility of Error!*] Ah, Dr. Dr! Where's your Love of Moral Honesty? Where's your Sincerity? Where your Conscience? Did ever any man pretend that *Tradition* will keep

keep men from any Possibility of Error *whether they follow it or no?* Were not our most express words put down by your self, p. 108. l. 27.28. [*If they follow this Rule they can never Err in Faith.*] And must those most important words be *still Omitted*, and no notice taken of them but only in an absurd Distinction, making * *Adhering to Tradition* or *Following* it, to be *Not-Following* it? Is this *Solid Answering* or plain *Prevaricating*? Again, what Nonsense does he make us speak by *omitting* these words? Is it not a Madness to say, a *Rule* will *direct* them *Right* that *do not Follow* it? That a *Means* will bring a man to his *End*, who *does not use* it? That a *Way* will keep a man from *Straying* in his Journey who *does not walk in it*? Yet all these Contradictions we must be Guilty of by his leaving out the words [*If follow'd*] 'Tis pretty too upon review of his words to reflect on his Craft [*'Tis vain to pretend that Orall Tradition will keep—*] whom was it pretended to keep from any Possibility of Error? He should have added [*the followers of it*] but because he had *Slipt* this all along, he leaves the Sense *Imperfect*, and the word [*keep*] must want the Accusative Case after it, due to its Transitive Sense by the Laws of Grammar, meerly to avoid his putting the *Right one*, because it would have been unfutable to all his foregoing Discourses, which never toucht it. But, since he speaks still what Causes of Error he has shown, tho' I have already manifested, that all those Causes were accompany'd with *Malice* in the First Deserters of Tradition, yet to enforce our Demonstration the more, I discourse thus. If Tradition could be deserted or *Innovation in Faith* made by the *Generality* of Christians (for none ever said or doubted but *Many Particulars* might do so) it must either proceed from some Defect in their *Understandings* or in their *Wills*. A defect in the *Will* is call'd *Badness* or *Malice*; whence, if they willfully *Innovated*, it must spring from some degree of

* See above
S. 72. & 74.

* Third
Cath. Letter
p. 6. 7. 8.

Malice. If in their *Understanding*; then it must either be in that Power as *Apprehending*, or *Knowing* Christ's Doctrin; or as *Retaining* it. It could not be in the Former, for none doubts but the body of the Church, particularly the Teachers who were to instruct the Rest, did very well *Comprehend* Christ's Doctrin *in the Beginning*, and the many* *Clear* ways *Tradition* comprizes to deliver it down, renders Faith Intelligible still to each succeeding Age. Wherefore since the Defect cannot be in their *Understanding* or their *having* Christ's Doctrin in their Hearts, it must be (if any where) in that knowing Power as 'tis *Retentive*, that is in their *Memory*. But, it was absolutely impossible the Generality of the Church should be so weak as to *forget* in any little determinate part of Time (by which Immediate steps Tradition proceeds) what was *Taught* and *Practis'd* a little before ; or Considering the Motives to keep them firm to it) so *Wicked* as to *conspire* to *Alter* it purposely. Therefore whatever Continuity there must be in some Particulars, it could not be that the Generality of the Church should have alter'd it, or consequently, *Err'd in Faith*. Wherefore this *Conclusion* stands yet *Firm*, the *Premisses* remaining yet *Untoucht*: Since he neither shows nor can show more Faculties in Mankind engag'd in the *Perpetuating* the Former Faith than these *Two*. Add, that he does not even *Attempt* to show that the Causes he produces can have the Power to prevail or carry it against the force of Tradition; and, unless he does this, all he alledges signifies nothing. But his *Especiall* Reason why he gives *no other Answer* (he should have said *none at all*) to our *Fourth Proposition*, is, because *he intends to shew in a particular Discourse, how the Errors and Corruptions he Charges on the Church of Rome did come into it.* That is, we cannot have an Answer to *Two lines* but by perusing a Large Book. I would desire him to resume the Force of all his little Testimonies,

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nies, and Conjecturall Descants upon them, with which that book abounds, and to be sure they *Conclude* the Point; which he shall never do. And unless he does this, he only shows he has taken a great deal of pains to no kind of purpose; since he leaves a presum'd *Demonstration* in its full force, without bringing so much as a pretended *Conclusive* Proof against it. Indeed, it is a great shame for him to pretend it; for 'tis to profess publickly to the world that he can produce *Better Arguments against* the Papists than he can for *his own Faith*; and that he cannot Answer the Argument, or say any thing to the Premises, yet he will revenge himself upon the naughty Conclusion, when he catches it *alone*, and unback't with any *Proof* for it.

78. Next, he will prove that our way of resolving Faith into Christ's and his Apostles Teaching, by the Infallibility of the Church's Human Authority or Tradition, is *Pelagianism*. But never was such a Malicious and Silly Charge so impotently defended. *We were told* (says he) *that Divine Faith must have Infallible Grounds, and when we come to examin them we find nothing but what is Naturall.* Here again our whole *Controversy* is lost, and a new State of the Question is obtruded. *Faith* as 'tis formally *Divine* has for its Grounds the *Divine Authority*; But are we in our *Controversy* *Examining* it as 'tis *Formally Divine*? Do either of us alledge Miracles, or any Arguments that *Proves* it to be such? Is it not *Confest* and *Suppos'd* by both Parties that the Faith *Taught at first* was *Divine*; and are we to *Examin* what's *Confest* and *Granted*? Or, that Supposition being agreed to, have we any more to do, but to prove what was the Doctrin taught at first, by Assigning a Certain Method of *Conveying* it down to us? He proceeds; *And now to avoid the Charge of Pelagianism, this Divine Faith is declar'd to be meer Human Faith.* Alas for him! Does not Divine Faith stand yet on it's own bottom, the *Divine Authority*, because *Human*

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Authority, gives those who yet know it not, Assurance of its Derivation to us ? The Immediate effect then of our Tradition is *Human Faith*; the Remote effect is to give us knowledge of a Doctrin of Faith which is *Divine*; not prov'd to be such by *Tradition*, but acknowledg'd to be so by our *Mutual Concession*. But how shamelessly insincere the Dr is to object that I Chang'd this purposely to avoid the Charge of Pelagianism: whenas he knows I had told himself the same in *Error Nonplust*, some years before any Contest arose about my Writings? Does he not cite my words here, that *this Human Faith* had by Tradition, leads us to what's *Divine* ? Human Faith is the *Way* or *Means* to know *Divine Faith*; And cannot we obtain the favour of him to intermit a while his constant Nonsense, and allow the *Means* to be distinguisht from the *End* ? He goes on : And so *Human Faith must have Infalible Grounds, but Divine Faith must stibst for it Self*. Can any thing be more Trifling ? What *Shifts* is Faith put to for Grounds, taken as 'tis formally Divine, in a Controversy which *supposes* it such; in which case no *Proof* nor Grounds for it *need be produc't* ? Do those that *holds* the Infalibility of the Churches *Humane Authority* deriving it down to us, deny but the Verity of the Mysteries thus deriv'd, as *in themselves*, depend on *Divine Revelation* as on their *Formall Motives* ? Do not these two consist well together ? May not Faith depend on the *Divine Authority in it self*, and as it was *made known at first*, and yet not be known to us *who live now* but by *Humane Authority*. Can he be Certain of Christian Faith by his own Grounds, but by the Book of Scripture, and yet does not *himself* say, that the Certainty he has of that Book, depends on *Tradition* or *Humane Authority*, and consequently that *Humane Faith* is the way to know *Divine Faith* ? What *Quacking* then and *Mountebanking* is this, to make me a *Pelagian* for doing the same himself does and publicly avows;

avows; omitting in the mean time my Answers which at large * clear'd before-hand, all that he has here so weakly and insincerely objected? Lastly, he tells us, that *if Divine Faith fixes not on the Infallibility of Tradition, then we may have Divine Faith without it.* Yes, by his *Enthusiastick Principles*, but not by *Connatural ways*; since himself must acknowledge that neither the Letter nor Sense of Scripture is *Absolutely Certain* without it.

* Third
Cath. Letter.
from p. 18,
to p. 28.

79. It would be very pleasant to see how this Gallant Caviller would prove *St. Paul* a *Pelagian Heretick*. That Blessed Apostle affirm'd that *Fides per auditum, Faith comes to our knowledge by Hearing*: For the Certainty of the Primitive Faith was resolv'd into the Certainty of the Senses, as the Means to come to the first knowledge of the Doctrin, and of *That Sense* more particularly, because *Preaching* was the Way of instilling Faith *then*. Now comes *Dr St.* and (having pray'd, I suppose for *Wisdom* before-hand) tells that Holy Apostle, that *Divine Faith must have Infallible Grounds*, but that *the Certainty of the Senses is meerly Natural*; That he runs from *Divine Motives* to *Humane* ones. He asks him smartly, *what Infallible Ground is there for this Divine Faith, and where it fixes?* If not on the Certainty of the Senses, then we may have *Divine Faith without them*. If it does fix on their Certainty, then *Divine Faith is to be resolv'd into Naturall Means*. And what is this but *Pelagianism*? Thus the stupendiously Learned, and more then supernaturally Enlighten'd Dean of *St. Pauls*, has clearly prov'd *St. Paul* himself an arrant *Pelagian*. But, if *St. Paul* should answer as I do that he spoke not of *Divine Faith*, or the Doctrin of it as *in it self*, or as 'tis *formally supernatural*, but only of *Divine Faith as standing under Natural Means* for us to come to *know* it, then it would follow that it would require higher Grounds to be resolv'd into as 'tis *Divine*, & yet, for all that, that he could have no Faith at all, nor certainty

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of it, unless by Miracle, but by virtue of these Natural Means to give him *knowledge of it*. But our Verball Controvertist never reflects that there may be *divers* Resolutions made of Faith as 'tis *controverted*, according to the nature or exigency of the Dispute. Against a Deist that holds it *not Divine*, it is to be resolv'd into the *Divine Authority*, and this must be shewn to be engag'd for it, by those *Motives of Credibility* which prove it to be *such*. But this is quite *besides* our present Dispute, since both parties grant it; and, consequently all his Discourse here is quite *besides the purpose*.

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80. I doubt not but the Dr would have had another sting at St. Paul for *Pelagianism*, in case he would not allow that a *Pious Disposition of the Will* did make the verdict of the *Sense of Hearing* Certain, and piece out the *Deafness of the Auditors*, when that Sense had some Imperfection; as he does here, by making me a *Pelagian* for saying the *Will's Assistance* cannot make an Argument if it be *defective*. Especially should we both say, that Dr *St's* *Moral Qualifications*, *Purity of Heart*, *Humility of Mind*, and *Prayer for Wisdom*, would not make a *deaf Ear* hear well, or a *bad Argument* conclude. For both our cases are perfectly Parallel; since we both speak of the *Way* to come at the Knowledge of Divine Faith. But his Logick, I see, would have his Readers (when an Argument drawn from meer Nature is propos'd which is short of *Concluding*, let it be in *Physicks*, *Metaphysicks*, or what he will, for it alters not our case) shake their heads very *piously*, and answer [*Truly Sir, tho' I see your Reason does not conclude, or satisfy my Understanding, that the thing you would prove is True, yet out of a Pious Inclination to the Cause, I will call in my Will's Assistance, and out of pure Goodness think it does conclude, and that the Thing is for all that, really True.* I would wish him by all means to maintain still that 'tis *Pelagianism* to deny that the *Inconclusiveness of an*
Argument

Argument is supply'd by the kind-heartedness of the Will. Nothing in the World but this can justify all his Insignificant Proofs, & make them pass for *valid & good* ones. 'Tis ridiculous he says, to alledge that *I resolve all into Christ's and the Apostles Teaching*. Why? Is it not agreed on between us, that *Christ is God*, and his Doctrine *Divine*? And is not this to bring us to *Divine Faith*, if we prove it to be *His* Doctrine? Or is it not enough for our purpose when 'tis confess'd on both sides that Christ's Doctrine is Divine? Why is it then *ridiculous* to profess we do this? *Because Cælestius & Pelagius did the very same*. And so I must be a *Pelagian* still; that's resolv'd on. Those Hereticks did indeed *pretend* their *Heresies* were *Christ's Doctrin*; But this is no particularity in *Them*, for every Heretick since Christ's time did the *same*; else they had not been *Hereticks*, but *Pagans, Jews, Turks, or Deists*: But, *we go no further upon this Principle than they did*. Why? Did they ever alledge, that the *Tradition* or *Immediate Testimony* of the Body of the Church, deliver'd down their Doctrin for *Christ's*? Or durst they disgrace themselves by going about to avail themselves of such an open and Notorious Lye? This he should have prov'd *solidly* and *clearly*: But, instead of *proving* it, he barely *says* it; and who will at this time of day believe his *word*? And yet, if he does not this, every sincere Reader must see that he has sacrific'd his sincerity to his spite against Catholics, and judges Slander and Calumny no Sin. Observe here by the way his consistency with himself. In his *Second Letter to Mr G.* p. 9. he affirm'd, that *we resolv'd All into meer Humane Faith*; and here he confesses *we resolve all into Christ's and his Apostles Teaching*. Had not I then good reason to ask him *if Christ was a meer Man*, it falling in so Naturally? Yet he is mighty angry at those words, and says *he gave no occasion for them*, and imputes it to *Malice*. I do assure him that I us'd those words to
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P. 114.

Ibid.

Ibid;

shew that *by resolving All into Christ's Teaching*, I resolv'd Faith finally into what is *confessedly Divine*. Why he should take it so to heart, or apply it to himself when it was not in the least intended, his conscience best knows. However, it puts him to make a Profession of his Faith in that point; which I heartily pray may be sincere.

T. 215.

* Dr St's Second Letter to Mr G. p. 23.

82. The last point which he thinks fit to take notice of, omitting (by his favour) many which were more concerning, is, that the Council of *Trent** *disowns a power of making Implicit Articles of Faith contain'd in Scripture to become Explicit by its Explaining the Sense of them*. He proves this, *Because the Church of Rome doth not pretend to make New Articles of Faith, whereas to make Implicit Doctrines to become Explicit, is really so to do*. This a little varies from what he said in his *Second Letter*; nor can I find a word of *making New Articles of Faith* pretended there, and I am sure there are none such in that place. Yet still he would put it upon the Council to introduce some Articles by new Explications of Scripture; but he only *says* it, not *proves* it; and so, till Proof comes, let it rest upon his *bare Word*, which signifies little. Other Answers I have given to this Point, (*Third Cath. Letter*, p. 64. 65.) which since he has taken no notice of, I shall presume they stand good in their full force.

83. He concludes with these words, [*But, because the Council of Trent doth pretend to Apostolical Tradition for the Points there determin'd, and the shewing that it had not Catholick and Apostolick Tradition, is the most Effectual Confutation of the present Pretence of Oral Tradition, I shall reserve that to another Discourse; part whereof, I hope, will suddenly be published.*] Now who sees not that, since a Demonstration for the Infallibility of Tradition is the *most Effectual*, and *most Compendious* Proof that is Imaginable; and unless it be answer'd, most necessarily concludes the Descent of that Faith from Christ which is held upon it;

it; and that the Evidence of such a Proof consisting in the *Necessary Connexion* of the Terms which are us'd in it, has the Self-same force whether the Council of *Trent*, or any Council, had ever been held, or not; who sees not, I say, that this is a meer plausible Shift to avoid the shock of our Arguments and to run the Field by the still-necessary; and Still-Friendly Assistance of his former bad Logick, viz. of *Arguing* against the *Conclusion* instead of *Answering* the *Premises*? And, therefore, that his proper Conclusion, had he spoken out Candidly, should have been this. [*But, because I was neither able to shew the Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith by my Principles, nor to make out, that the Rule I have Assign'd does influence any Point of Faith, so as to prove it to be Absolutely Certain, that 'tis Christs Doctrin; nor yet able to Answer their close Arguments against the Absolute Certainty of Mine, or for the Absolute Certainty of the Catholique Faith, therefore to come off handsomely before I utterly lose my Credit, I think it the safest and wisest Expedient to let the Premises alone or pass over them with some sleight touches, and to Combat the Conclusion by Quoting of Authors; and tacking the Two disparate Matters together as well as I can, so to make a kind of Transition from the One to the Other, I will set myself to write against the Council of Trent. A business which will take mightily in this Juncture; Nor will many Readers much concern themselves in case they should observe it, how I have dropt the Question, or sprung away from my Adversary.*] And so a good Journey to the Drs *Rambling Pen*, till I meet him next in the Field where we fought *Last*: Whither, in the behalf of Christian Faith, whose Certainty he has here *Undermin'd* I do recall and Challenge him.

The Concluding SECTION.

84 **H**itherto of Doctor *St's* Sins of *Commission*; viz. of his Groundless and Impertinent Calumnies, his manifest Falshoods against his own Knowledge, his constant prevarication from the Question in every respect, and this quite thorough his whole Answer, his bad Logic laid open in many Instances, his Shifts and Evasions, his Paralogisms, Cavils and Contradictions. Now follow his Sins of *Omission*. By which I do not mean his Failing to give a *good* Answer to those Arguments he thought fit to take notice of; for this, as has been shewn in every Particular, would spread one Universal Blot over his whole Book; but his not so much as *Attempting* to give the *Reasons* I alledg'd to prove them, or other particular Omissions charg'd upon him, *any* Answer at all, or taking the least notice of them.

85. To begin with my *First Catholick Letter*, or the Answer to Dr. *St's* First Letter to Mr. *G.* Why might we not know the *particular* Reason *how* Mr. *T.* came to be satisfy'd; this being of such special Concern, and laying so precise an Obligation upon us to clear that Point? but changing his making a Secret of Mr. *T's* *convincing Reason*, which was requir'd of him, *p.* 3. 4. into his making a Secret of *the Ground of his Certainty*, (*p.* 16.) Why did he turn it off to Mr. *G.* to shew that the Doctor's Protestants *have not* Absolute Certainty of *their* Faith, whenas he had taken it upon himself to shew they *had*? but instead of giving a Reason for that carriage of his, to deny his own express words (*First Letter*, *p.* 7.) which put the Proof upon Mr. *G.* and then, to turn Absolute Certainty of his Protestant Faith, which consists of a determinate Number of Points, into Certainty of *Scripture*; which

First Catho.
Letter. p. 4.

P. 4. 5.

P. 6; 7.

which perhaps may not signify so much as *one* Point of Faith, unless he shew Absolute Certainty that the Letter of it is *rightly understood* in those Texts that contain those Points? which he is so far from shewing that he not so much as goes about it. Why no Reply to our Proof that Mr. G. has, by doing his own work, at the same time perform'd what the Doctor would needs have put him upon; *viz.* prov'd that Doctor S's Church has *no* Certainty of *its* Faith? Why conceal'd he the true Meaning of the word [*Traditionary*] given by us, but took it purposely in *another* Sense, and then rally'd upon it? Why no notice taken of our Explication of those words [*If they follow'd this Rule*] declar'd by us to mean the [*Believing still the same*] which had forestall'd his ill-grounded Descant upon them (p. 108. 109.) and why no regard to that most Important *Conditional Proposition*, but starting aside to-ways how Errours might come in by *not following* it; which instead of Answering, asserts and makes good our Tenet? Why no Reply to our several *Reasons* brought against his intollerably bad Logick, shewing at large from many heads the absurdity of it, and that the Subject of our Argument, as impugn'd by his Instance, was not at all like *Zeno's* denying of Motion; which Reasons had *prevented* and utterly defeated his pittifull Defence of it here? Why nothing to the unavoidable force of our Argument, manifesting it to be *Self-evident* that Tradition is a Certain Rule? Why does he not justify his palpable Prevarication from the whole Question laid out at large & prov'd against him, p. 21. 22. Why not a word of Answer to my Discourse shewing Absolute Certainty & Infallibility to be the same? Why does he no where distinguish himself & his Protestants from all sorts of Hereticks owning the same *Common Rule*; by shewing us by what *Particular Means* he is *more* Certain of the *True Sense* of Scripture than they were, and

P. 8.

Ibid.

P. 8. 9.

P. 10. 11. 12.
13. 14. 15. &
P. 33. 34. 35.

P. 18.

P. 21. 22.

P. 23.

P. 25. 26.

thence *differenc's* from them by his having some particular Rule or *Way* to arrive at True Faith which they *had not*; This being a Point of the Highest Importance in our Controversy, and most Earnestly prest upon him over and over? And yet for all his flourishes about *Criterions* he has said nothing to those Reasons, only he has made a sleight Discourse of his own, *p. 53. 54.* but never shew'd any particular Means securing his Party from Erring, more than the vilest Hereticks us'd. Why little or no regard to my *Reasons* shewing that Scripture Interpretable by their private Judgment of Discretion is not the Rule which the Generality of Protestants rely on; which, if true, utterly overthrows his whole Pretence to That for his Rule? He blunders indeed about it in clear words, and tells his own Tale very prettily; but he has not answer'd my *Reasons*, as the Reader may discern, who is pleas'd to compare them with his Reply. Lastly, why no Answer to each particular Proposition of my *Short Discourse*, or shewn it inconnected, demonstrating that *none* who follow'd *his* Rule can have *Assurance* that what they believe is *Christ's Doctrin*: But instead of this Duty, bringing pretended False Suppositions against the *Whole*, which suppos'd nothing but that we could have no more Reason to judge the *Socinians* Insincere, or Careless, or less Skilfull in the Sense of words than we have to think *He* is?

P. 26. 27. 28.
29.

P. 30. 31.

86. These are his *Omissions* in Answering my *First Catholick Letter*. As for my *Second*; since his Title pretends an Answer to them All in Generall, and he refers us to another able to speak *for himself*, meaning his *Reflector*, we are to imagin he makes account he has Answer'd them All, by Himself or by his Proxy. But, good God! what an Answer has that weak man given us? His Discourse is a *Chain of Sand*. 'Tis a mess of Controversy dish't up in Sippets; a meer Hash of Repartees, or reason

son torn into Raggs. A *Discourse*, as every man knows, has it's true Force by the *Constant Tenour* of it; and this Tenour is shatter'd all to pieces by a new invented Method of short *Dialogues*; where he makes me, at his pleasure, say as little at a time as he lists, and he plays upon it as much as he pleases: I must *break-off* just where he thinks fitting, and he *Enlarge* against an imperfect Discourse, unassisted by it's Compart's, as long as he Judges convenient. Now he's at the beginning of my Book, and immediately at the Middle or End of it; gathering thrums-ends of little Sentences, which he patches together so aukwardly that they have no Connexion at all but what his unskillful or Partiall hand bestows upon them. If we expect Reason from him, he tells us he never undertook to *Prove* but to *Reflect*. A very pretty come-off! I wonder what Answer is proper to a man who *proves nothing*, nay not so much as *Undertook* it! Thus much for his Method: But the Tricks and Shifts in managing it are Innumerable: 'Tis almost as easy to determin how many words may be made of the four and Twenty Letters, as to trace all the Anagrams he makes of my Sense, by weaving it in *his* loom to sute his own Fancy or Interest. When our Question is only about a *Certain Rule of Faith*, he alters it when he lists, to a *Certain Rule of Life* (p. 33.) as if we pretended Scripture *not Clear* in *Morall* Points: by which means he turns the whole Question to a quite different Subject. His Contradictions are frequent, for he never speaks of the Nature of any thing that concerns our Dispute but he constantly falls in o that irrecoverable lapse. As he turn'd the precise Duty of *proving* into the Needless Impertinency of *Reflecting*, so tell him of Falsifications he tells you (p. 52.) he meant them for *Ironies*. And, indeed his whole *Reflexionary* (if I may call it so) is nothing but a continu'd Irony; it being very hard to know when he's in Jest, when in Earnest:

Only

Only he garnishes his *Scorn* with demure pretences of Charity and Civility, that so he may affront his Adversary with a more plausible Gab of Affected Gravity and Godliness.

87. As for the strength of his *Reasons*, since one *Instance* is held by Dr St. and him a Competent Answer to a pretended *Demonstration*, I hope one pregnant Instance how he quite misses the whole matter in hand, may be allow'd sufficient to render insignificant his *Hopping* and *Skiping* Dialogues, by shewing plainly that his ill-levell'd *Reflexions* hit not *me*, but *Squint* aside to other Subjects. E're I come to my Instance, I desire the Reader to bear in Remembrance (for I cannot repeat it too often because my Adversary is resolv'd never to take notice of it) that, Our Controversy *Supposes* as agreed to by both Parties that Christ's Doctrin is *Divine*, and that our *Whole* Question is about the Means to bring down to us those *Sublime* Spiritual Articles of Christian Faith, with such a *Certainty* and *Clearness* as may oblige us to assent firmly and unalterably, that what we hold concerning them now at present is the self-same that was taught by him and his Apostles; and consequently is *Divine* and *True*. Next, we affirm that the Letter of Scripture not being *Clear* to people of all sorts looking after Christ's True Doctrin, in those Texts which relate to such High Points, the best way to satisfy such men that those Articles came down invariably from Christ is the *Humane Authority* of the Christian Church. And, Lastly, that the Credibleness of this Authority is prov'd by *Intrinsic Mediums*, taken from the Natures of Things lying levell to our Reason, which contribute to support it from being liable to be deceiv'd or to deceive us in that affair: *viz.* from the Nature of *Man*, who being a *Rational* Creature cannot possibly act without a Motive or a Reason; and is withall endow'd with such and such Faculties belonging to such

such a Nature; As also from the Practical Nature, & Highest Import of the Doctrin to be deliver'd, and the Nature of those most powerfull Motives obliging the Generality to whom they are apply'd, to transmit down faithfully a Doctrin held Divine; and, Lastly, from the Nature of divers Circumstances of the Universe. All which are laid out in my *Second Cath. Letter*, p. 57. 58. 59. 60. To which nothing but a very sleight return (with many Omissions) has been given us by Him, and nothing at all by Dr St. tho' these (as the Reader may see if he pleases to review them) be the most forcible part of that Treatise to prove the uninterrupted *Perpetuity* of Tradition hitherto, on which the Resolution of our Grand Question mainly depends. 'Tis enough, it seems, for such a trifling Reflector, at the end of his Pamphlet, to call the passages he has omitted, amongst which are the *Natures* of those things, *Hedges and Puddles*; and *close Reasons* drawn from them *frisking Fancies*; and that's all can justly be expected from one who seems to be a sworn Schollar to the Great Professor of Learned Jest and Ingenious Prevarications.

88. These particulars concerning our Tenet, known to all that have read our Controversy, being reflected on, let's see how this Gentleman represents it, and how profoundly he discourses against us. In his 12th Page he will needs repeat our Tenet, or (as he with much Formality is pleas'd to call it) *the Lesson I have taught him*: which, put into distinct Sentences, he makes to be this.

1. *Your Churches Authority is Human Authority. Answ.* Our Church's Authority is also *Divine*, and as such 'tis the Rule of Faith to those who are already Faithfull: But in our Controversy, which is about the Way for men to come to Faith, 'tis not proper to alledge any other than her *Natural* or *Humane* Authority, consisting of a vast Body of *Men* both *able* and *oblig'd* to testify such open matters

ters of Fact as is the Delivery of a Doctrin so Qualify'd by those that *educated* us; And the Reason is because 'till men come at *Christ's* Faith they can only guide themselves by their Reason; whence the Credibility of that Authority must be provable by Reason against those who shall deny it. 2. He says, *It has force to prove the Truths which depend upon it.* Yes; it has force to prove to us this matter of Fact, that those Truths descended from *Christ*; but not the *Intrinsical Truth* of any one Article in it self. To do this is the work of *Divine Revelation*, not of *Humane Authority*. 3. *It has this force and concludes against such as own its Veracity, but it deserves no Assent further than Reason gives it to deserve.* Well then, since we bid him guide himself by his Reason e're he admits it, will he at least admit it and yield assent to it, when Reason shews him it deserves it? This is all we desire of him; and 'tis a very reasonable request in us, for it only desires he would not renounce his Reason and forfeit his Manhood. Now come his Conclusions from mistaken Premisses: *Hence I conclude, Seeing We admit not your Church's Authority, nor own its Veracity it proves nothing to us nor concludes anything against us.* From what Antecedent is this Conclusion drawn? Did we ever press him to admit it *blindly*; the Point is, will he renounce his Reason when it tells him this Authority ought to be believ'd? This is our Tenet and should have been taken in e're he had inferr'd any thing at all: but then it would have marr'd his Conclusion and his admirable Method of taking every Discourse of mine to pieces and never putting it together again, and so it was thought expedient to neglect it. His next Conclusion is, *Seeing Articles of Faith depend not on Humane Authority, your Church's Authority can have no effect on Humane Nature to oblige to a Belief of them.* Where we have near as many Faults as Words. For, First, Articles of Faith in themselves or as to their
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Intrinsicall *Verity*, depend only on the Divine Authority as their Formall Motive; but, *as to us*, or as to our knowledge of those Articles *Now*, which were taught by Christ *long since* (which is our only business) a successive Human Authority, the most strongly supported of any that ever was in the World to convey down a matter of Fact of Infinit Concern, is the properest way to *Attest* them; whence all those Articles, *in that regard* do depend on that Human Authority, after the same manner as even himself also holds the *Book of Scripture* does. Secondly, What an Incredible Folly is it, not to distinguish between those Articles which were *Taught at First*, (and, so, are Divine) as in *Themselves*, and the same Articles as *Knowable by us* *Now* to have been *Taught Long ago*? nor to reflect that our Controversy only treats of them under this latter Consideration? Nor to know that, *as thus Consider'd*, All Articles of Faith not only *May* but *Must* necessarily depend on Human or *Naturall Means*, since without *Such* they cannot be introduc't into our understandings connaturally, nor by any way but by Immediate Inspiration, which is perfect *Enthusiasm*? Nor Lastly, not to advert that even the *Divinity* of Faith depends, in *some* sort, on *Naturall Means*? St. Paul tells us *Faith comes by Hearing*; and, if so, then Faith depended on *Hearing* as to its coming to be *Known by us*. Nay, as Christian Faith was *Formally from God*, it depended thus on *Miracles*, which could not be known to be such but by their being *above the Course of Nature*; nor could they be known to be *above the Course of Nature* unless the course of Nature *it self* had been *fore-known*, the Knowledge of which is only *Naturall* or *Human*. Thirdly, His following words in this Ridiculous Conclusion, shew him utterly ignorant of our whole Question; otherwise he could not with any degree of sincerity have put it upon us, that we hold the Human Authority of our Church ob-

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lises to a belief of the Articles themselves ; whereas what we hold is, that it only obliges us to Assent they *came from Christ*, or were inerrably deliver'd down by the Church's Testimony. Fourthly, By leaving out all mention of what's most particularly our Tenet in this Point, he puts it upon us to hold that Human Authority has effect upon Human Nature *of it self* ; whereas we never presum'd or affirm'd it either *had* or *ought* to have any but by Vertue of the *Reasons* which vouch't for its Veracity, nay, I both *Affirm'd* and *Prov'd* the direct *Contrary*. His Third Conclusion is, *Seeing all its Credit depends on its Intrinsicall Reasons produc't, till they be produc't we are not bound to give any Credit to it.* No, nor bound to *mind* them much it seems, nor *Answer* them fully *when produc't* ; as appears by his omitting the most forcible Reasons for the Certainty of Tradition's Continuance as was Lately shown. But why is this made a distinct Conclusion or disjoynted from the rest, whereas it was the most necessary and Essentiall part of our true Tenet ? Because the Method he so Religiously observ'd throughout his Dialogue-Answer, which is to shatter asunder the intire Sense of every passage, would not allow it. His Fourth Conclusion is, *When these Reasons shall be produc't, its Testimony has but the Nature of an Externall Motive, not of an Intrinsicall Ground.* Answ. *Intrinsicall Ground* ? To what ? To Christian Faith as 'tis *Divine* ? 'Twas never pretended, nor can it belong in any regard to our Question, since 'tis not *disputed* between us, but *Acknowledg'd* by us both, that Christ's Doctrin is *such*. Means he then 'tis not a *Proper Medium* to prove Christ's Faith *deriv'd* to us who live *now* ? How can he even pretend to shew that so vast a Testimony is not proper to *Attest* a Notorious *Matter of Fact*, viz. what Doctrin was *Deliver'd* immediately before, and this throughout every Age, Year, or Day ? Again, what means he when he says, *Testimony is not an Intrinsicall Ground* ?

Ground? What man in his senses ever said or thought it? We spoke indeed of *Intrinsicall Grounds* to prove the Credibleness of that *Testimony*, but not a word have we even hinting that *Testimony* it self is an *Intrinsicall Ground* to *any thing*. If he will needs be talking Nonsense let him take it to himself, and nor put it upon me. Lastly, why is not an *Extrinsicall Ground* or *Testimony* prov'd to be such by *Intrinsicall Reasons* sufficient in our case? This *should* have been shewn, but for this very reason 'tis not so much as taken notice of either by him or his Master. In a word, he uses *some* of our words, taken asunder from the Context of our intire *sense*; then blends them confusedly together on any fashion, without any kind of order or respect to the true Question; he gives us *Relative* words without telling us what they *relate* to; he puts upon us Tenets we never advanc't or held, but the direct *Contrary*. And the witty Gentleman would still persuade his Reader he is *Repeating his Lesson I have Taught him*, when as all the while he deserves more then a *Ferula* for his rehearsing it *wrong*, or rather saying it *Backwards*. Then follows his Grand Conclusion as the Flower of all the foregoing ones, which we may be sure hits the Point Exactly; *And therefore* (says he) *either your Position overthrows your Church's Authority, or It your Position*. Most Excellent? My Position is about *Tradition* which is the *Self same* thing with the *Church's Authority*; and this precious Scribbler will needs have the same thing to destroy it self. A fit Upshot for a Discourse without sence.

89. We see by this one Instance there is scarce one Line, nor many Significant Words in this half-page of his, but runs upon Enormous Mistakes. And, does he think I have nothing else to do but to stand *Rectifying* still what he all along takes such Care and Pains to put into *Disorder*? Especially, since those few things that are pertinent, are abundantly spoketo in my *Third Catholick*

Letter, and this present *Reply*. I must intreat the Dr to excuse me if I have no mind to *break* his *Young* Controversists, and teach them how to *Manage*. Mr G. did him, I hope, no disparagement in making me his Substitute; but 'tis not so gentle in him to set such a *Fresh Man* upon my back. I'll have nothing to do with his little *Journey-Men* or *Apprentices* till the World be satisfy'd that their *Master* himself is a *better Artist*. And, if it shall appear that even the Learned Dr St. is able to make nothing of so bad a Cause, 'tis neither Discreditable to me nor any Disadvantage to the *Truth* I am defending, if I neglect such a *Sixth-rate* Writer who confesses himself *unworthy to carry his Books after him*.

P. 2.

90. The Omissions in answering my *Second Catholick Letter* are as many as that Letter it self contains: since his untoward Method renders all his Talk, Twitching and Girding at little sayings of mine, utterly insignificant. Whence, that whole Treatise as 'tis in it self, stands yet *Intire*, unless the Dr can shew by his new *Logick* that to *mince half a Book into Fragments* is to *Answer the Whole*.

91. Thus the Dr has trickt off the answering my *Second Cath. Letter*. But his Omissions in Answering the Third are both numerous and most highly Important, and he is to render an Account of all this long Roll of his Neglects. Why did he not clear himself of his altering there the Notion of *Tradition* into *Articles* and *Powers* of doing this or that, shewn at large, p. 4. 5. Why answers he not the several Reasons, proving against him, that *Tradition* brings down the *Sense* of *Christ's* Doctrin, and not only Common *Words*; in the *Clear Delivery* of which *Sense* consists one of the main Properties of a *Rule*, viz. its *Plainness* to People of all sorts who are to be regulated by it? And why, instead of performing this necessary Duty, does he (p. 43.) after having vapour'd that 'Tis *bravely said if it could be made out*, does he not so much as mention
the

* Third
Cath. Letter.
from p. 4. 5.

P. 5. 6. 7.
8. 9.

the Reasons by which it was made out ; but ramble into such Nonsense (p. 43.) that *He* and his Party (who are Deserters of Tradition) cannot mistake it ; that *Tradition* (or the Church's Human Testimony) *being the Rule of Faith* is a *part of Christ's Doctrin*, &c. Why no Excuse for his deforming the meaning of that plain word [*Tradition*] into many unfutable Significations, and putting it in all shapes but its own ? Why no Defence of his most ridiculous Drollery, in paralleling *Tradition* or the *Testimony of God's Church* to the Relation of two or three partial Witnesses of his own side in favour of their fellows ? Of for his *Inconsonancy* to himself & his *Insincerity* in thus perverting it still when he was to *impugn* it ; whenas he took it very right when it made for himself ? Why not a word to my *Clearest Demonstration*, that 'tis impossible but Tradition must bring down a *Determinate Sense* of the Tenets it delivers, which he answers not at all, but only brings against Conclusion an Instance of the *Corinthians* and *Arlemonites* (p. 45. 46.) which as far as it pretends they *pleaded Tradition* for their Heresy, (taking Tradition as we do for the Immediate Testimony of the Church) is both False and Senseless. Why no Answer at all to that most Concerning Point prov'd against him, that the Church has Power to declare *diverse* Propositions to be of *Faith*, not held *distinctly* before, without any prejudice at all to *Tradition* ? And why no notice taken of my most Evident Proof that we make Christian Faith as 'tis Formally *Divine* rely on the Divine Authority, notwithstanding our Tenet, that the Church's *Humane* Authority is the Means to bring us to the knowledge of *Christ's Doctrin* ; and that the asserting this Later is not to overthrow the Church's Authority in matters of Faith, as he objected ? As also that the Venerable *F. W.* was not an Adversary to our way, and that *Lomius* his Book the Dr rely'd on was no Argument that my Doctrin

T. 19. 20. 21. *Grin was faulty even in the opinion of my Judges; Why gave he no reply to any of these, but still run on with his former Calumnies, as if nothing had been produc't to shew his manifest and Wilfull Mistakes? Why no Answer to my Reasons proving at large the impotency of his malice in charging Pelagianism, more than to repeat a few of words for a shew, that this Humane Authority leads us to what's Divine, and there stopping; whereas the very * next words [Yet not by its own force but by vertue of the Supposition agreed upon that Christ's Doctrin is such] had spoil'd all his pretence? Why no notice taken of my Citation out of Error Nonplust writ against himself fifteen years ago; which forestall'd all his rambling Mistakes, and by consequence, shew'd him strangely Insincere, in dissembling his knowledge of my Tenet so expressly declar'd.*

P. 22. 23. 24. 25 26 27.

* See Third Cath. Letter P. 24.

P. 26.

P. 28.

92. Why no Plea alledg'd to justify his shuffle from the Grounds of his Protestant Faith in particular to the Grounds of Christian Faith in Common; nor to excuse his next Shuffle, and Nonsense to boot, in making [*Faith*] by vertue of an *id est*, to signify the Grounds for his Ground of Faith; and turning [*Certainty of Scripture*] into a long ramble, viz. into [*Certainty of the Grounds on which we believe Scripture to contain the word of God.*] Why not a word of Reply to my Discourses, there and in many other places, shewing that Scripture's *Containing* Faith is nothing at all to our purpose, but the *Getting out* from Scripture it's true *Meaning* or *Sense*, this only being our Faith; and that his *Faith* is still *Uncertain* unless there be *Certainty* that such and such Articles *Are* Contain'd there. Which Point tho' it be of the Highest Consequence, yet he never sets himself to *solve* our Arguments against it, in his whole pretended Answer; but he runs on still in the same Errour, as if nothing had been atledg'd to shew his Discourses insignificant and frivolous! Why

no Answer to my Discourse proving that a Rule or Ground is *none*, if it carry not thorough to the *particular Points*, especially to those which are *most Fundamentall*, unless *granting* it in effect (p. 36.) and allowing *no Absolute Certainty* to any *particular Point* of Faith, may be called an Answer? Why no Excuse for his Skewing Comment upon his own Answer (which spoke of Absolute Certainty of *all Christ's Doctrin*, which consists of such and such particular Tenets) to the *Writings of the Apostles*; whereas there was not a word of *Writing* in Mr. G's Question or in his own Answer either? Nor any notice taken of my Argument, manifesting that a *Resolution of Faith* speaks *Connexion* of the *Motives* that are to prove it Christ's Doctrin, to the *Points* of Faith; laid home to him in a Close Discourse demonstrating the *Necessity* it should be *such*. Why no Account of his distinguishing between *Christ's Doctrin* and that of the *Apostles*; that so he might mis-represent *Tradition* and alter the Question from a *Publick* to a *Private Delivery*? Why no Reason given of his not Resolving his Faith into the *Apostles Preaching*, but only into their *Writing*; I mean, no Answer to my Reasons why he ought to have resolv'd it into the former, at least, *Equally*? Why no Answer to my Reasons, shewing from his ill-laid Principles, that Perfect Contradictories, *Points of Faith* and wicked *Heresies*, opposit to them, are both *Equally Certain*? Why no Excuse for his Shuffling from the *New Testament's* Containing *all the Divine Revelations*, to the *Church's making men free by degrees upon the Certain Canon of it*, which is there *shewn* (and indeed appears of it self) to be a quite *disparate business*? Why not the least Excuse for his most abominable *four-fold Prevarication* in answering to one single Question, expos'd there at large; and why no Defence or particular Explication of his beloved *Sufficient Certainty*, nor any Application of it to the Nature, Ends, and

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and Uses of a firm Faith, that any Point is *Christ's* true Doctrin, shewing that his feeble Motives are sufficient for those particular purposes? Why, to make his odd Similitude of Scripture's being a *Purse*, apposit, does he not *shew* us some *Certain Way*, how the *Gold and Silver Points of Faith* (as he calls them) may be got out of it, without danger of extracting thence the impure Dross of *Errour* and *Herefy* instead of *True Faith*? Again, to make it square, why does he not rather make the Heads and Hearts of the First Faithfull the *Purses*, since (as was shewn him) *Faith is more properly* Contain'd there than in a *Book*? Or, if he will needs make use of an *Improper* Container of Faith too, why does not he put *two* Purses; *viz.* the *Souls of the Faithfull*, and the *Scripture*? And why not a word of Reply to my Plain Reasons why he ought to have done both these? Why no Answer to my Reasons proving that *All* the Points of Faith are *Necessary* for the *salvation* of *Mankind*, and for the *Church*; otherwise than by rambling to *Transubstantiation* (p. 84.) and that he sees no Necessity of it: Which makes his often-allegd'd Distinction of *Necessary & Unnecessary* Points, brought to avoid the Question, perfectly frivolous; and why runs he still on with the same Distinction in this pretended Answer without taking off the Exceptions against it, by only crying *Alas for him!* when I askt him, *If Christ taught any unnecessary Articles*: and by saying they are not *equally* Necessary, p. 33. Why nothing to justify that his Assent of Faith may not be False, and so, *no Faith*? Why no Reply to my *Reasons*, that, notwithstanding his pretended Grounds, *He* has no Absolute Certainty that even the *Letter* of Scripture is *Right*; whereas, if it be not, he can have no Certainty but all is *Wrong* that is grounded upon it; since, in that case he may embrace a *Grand Herefy* for *True Faith*? Why no Answer to my plainest Argument, shewing how *Christ's* Doctrin, continu'd all a-
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long in the Breast of the Church, is the best Means to correct the Letter in Texts that contain Faith? Why no Reply to my many Reasons, shewing that the Ancient Church allow'd our way of *Tradition*, and disallow'd his of *Scripture privately Interpreted*? Why does he not confute my Discourses, manifesting that he can have no Absolute Certainty by his Principles of the *Number of Books*; or of each *Chapter, Verse*, and Material *Word* in each Verse that concerns any Point of Faith; without doing which, he cannot pretend to have Certainty of the *Letter*, nor, consequently, of any one of those *Points*? Why no Reply to that Important Objection, that if Scripture were the Rule of Faith, the Primitive Church had, for some time, but half or three-quarters of their Faith, or less, (and so, by his Principles, were but three-quarters or half Christians) according as the several pieces came by degrees to be spread, accepted, or universally acknowledg'd; nay perhaps *no Faith at all*, as was there shewn; and why did, he instead of replying, *turn it off to the single Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and to an Insignificant *If*? Why, when it was objected that divers of his Christian Churches doubted of divers Books of Scripture, and some late Brethren of his of some others, does he again turn it off (as to the former) to the *Canon of Scripture* made afterwards; and to the later says nothing? Why not a word to my Clearest Proof that our Tradition or Testimony for *Doctrin* is incomparably more large in its source, which gives it its chief force, than his is for *Scripture's Letter*? Why does he not clear himself of his preferring his *Sober Enquirer* before the Church, the unreasonableness of which was urg'd home against him, nor justify his weak discourses in some sleighter passages laid open, p. 64. 65. Why not a syllable of Answer to that most highly-concerning Discourse, and which, if it stands in its full force, overthrows all the

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*See above §.

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whole Fabrick of his Doctrin, viz. that a *Rule or Ground* are *Relative* Words, and therefore Scriptures Letter cannot be an *Absolute Certain Rule or Ground*, unless its Ascertainin^g virtue affects the *Articles* known by it? This Point has been prest upon him so vigorously, and pursu'd with so many forcible Arguments that there can be no plainer Confession that his Cause is lost than not to attempt to answer them; especially, since the hinge of the whole Controversy depends upon it. It was his Concern too to avow or disavow his dear Friend Dr. Burnet's Position, making his Sober Enquirer judge of Councils; but he would not be so candid. Why declines he the giving us satisfaction that he does indeed hold the Testimony for Scripture *Absolutely Certain*, by making out from the Nature of the Things why it must be so? See, Reader, how it was there *demanded* of him and urg'd upon him to do himself and his Faith that Honour and Credit; Yet he is perfectly deaf to all solicitations of that kind. And the Reason is, because, should he do this as he ought to do, he must necessarily make the Church Infallible, and rely upon her Infallibility for the Certainty of Scriptures Letter; and should it come to be *prov'd* that 'tis easier to transmit down the *same Doctrin* than an *Exact Copy*, this would oblige his Sober Enquirer to be led by her in *matters of Faith*. A condescendence not to be submitted to by his Fanatick Friends; both because their First Principle is to think themselves wiser than the Church; as also, because to prove this would make the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrin too strong by *Proofs* and *Outward Means*, which their *Gifted* and *Inspir'd* Genius (impossible ever to be prov'd but by doing Miracles) cannot away with. To proceed, Why clears he not himself from being oblig'd by his Principles to own a *Brotherhood* with all *Hereticks* who profess to follow Scripture as much as he does; by shewing some *Absolutely*

solutely Certain Means to distinguish *his Faith* from *theirs*; Did not the doing this mainly concern his Credit, when it was severely objected, and *shewn* that he had given *just* occasion for this *Suspicion* of all-comprehending Principles? Why no Account given of the Absolute Certainty of *Particular Texts*, and the most significant *Words* in each of them, as well as of the *Canon* or *Number* of Books; without which, let the Canon be as Certain as it will, 'tis impossible for him to know assuredly whether what he holds be *True Faith* or *Heresy*? Why no Answer to my Objection that to be the *Word of God* is not sufficient to make Scripture a *Rule*, unless it has withall *Perspicuity* or *Clearness*, to give those who read it and rely on it, Absolute Certainty of its true *Sense*, or *Faith*, in those high Mysteries and Spiritual Points controverted between the Church and her Deserters? Why no Reply to my Confutation of his *smartest* or rather *Only* Argument to prove Scripture a *Rule*, given by me particularly to every Branch of it? Is not a business of such high Consequence worth his *Defence*, his whole Cause, (as far as 'tis manag'd by him) *standing* or *falling* by his *maintaining* or *deserting* that main Proof for it? Why does he give us no Grounds that elevate *Faith* (as it depends on the Rule ascertaining us it came from *Christ*) above *Opinion*; whenas it was charg'd upon him that he had no such Grounds, and he was loudly call'd upon to produce them; but to aggravate the fault, to call here (p. 41.) all the Points of Christian Faith (there spoken of) *Particular Opinions*? Why takes he no notice of the several *Senses* of the word [*Rule*] and in *which* of those *Senses* it is taken *properly*, and why it must necessarily be taken in such a *Sense* in our Controversy; but instead of doing this, run on *wilfully mistaking* it still? Why not a word in Confutation of an *Infallible Judge*, as that Point is stated by me? Why did he not accept my Challenge that he could not shew me *anyone Solid Proof*

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in his whole Treatise that he could maintain ; since the doing this had been a great Blurr to me, and a high Credit to himself ; nay the very *offering at it*, might have kept our Readers in some *Suspence* whether he were perfectly baffled or no, whenas his total *declining* it is a plain Confession he does not think fit to *stand* to any one Proof he has produc't ? Why no Reply to my Discourse demonstrating that a *Rule* must be the *Immediate Light* to know the Thing in order to which 'tis to regulate us ; and, therefore, that, however he pretends to *Scripture*, yet his *own* Interpretation, or the *Means* he uses to Interpret it, is unavoidably his *Rule* ? As also that the Testimony of all Christian Churches did not recommend to him *such* a Rule of Faith ; and that a *Testimony* for the *Letter* confess'd by himself to be *Fallible*, stood in great need of his Logick to make what's built on it to be *Absolutely Certain* ? Why not a word to the Testimony of that Antient and Holy Father, and most Solid Controvertist, *St. Athanasius* ; which quite overthrows the whole Scheme of his Doctrin, and makes all his Sober Enquirers *Unbelievers* or *Infidels* ? And why no Excuse for his not putting amongst his *Helps* the *Judgment of the present Church*, at least of the Church of *England* ; (this being both an easier Help than 'tis to use his other painfull Methods to understand Scripture right, & more agreeable to the Order of the world) especially, since he stands impeacht of destroying Church-Government as to any thing belonging to *Faith* ? Why does not he shew us how Mr T. could be a *Sober Enquirer*, whom he defends for so suddenly *settling* his Enquiry and *Resolving*, tho' he did *not use* those Means which the Dr himself affirm'd his Sober Enquirers were *bound to use* ; especially, since this carriage of the Dr's shews him very willing to contradict at pleasure even his own Principles, and to dispense with those Obligations he himself had impos'd, when it

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it suits with his Interest? Whence every considering man must necessarily conclude he holds not heartily and steadily to any Principle at all. Why should not his Sober Enquirers trust the Church rather than themselves; and why no Answer to the Reasons why they should? Why does not he confute my Discourse, proving that a Judge proceeding upon an Inerrable Rule is *Infallible*; and that 'tis no prejudice to the Church, that those whom she has *cast out*, or are her *Enemies*, deny her to be *such*? Why answers he not my Particular Reasons against his kind of Judgment of Discretion, or the Reasons given for *ours*, but makes impertinent Discourses of his own at random, without regarding either our Objections, or our Proofs; nay, when he had occasion, without acknowledging their Distinction, but most unconscionably pretending them to be the *same*; whereas their Difference and perfect Opposition to one another, is laid out there very largely and particularly.

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And now, Gentlemen, I request even those who are the most Partial of his Friends to count over the Pages cited in the Margent; and, if you find by an exact Review that I have neither *misreckon'd* them, nor *misrepresented* his *Answers*; be pleas'd to frame thence an Impartial Judgment of his *prodigious Confidence* in pretending in his Title that this every-way-Defective Treatise is, *In Answer to my Catholick Letters*; whereas he has given *no Answer at all* (to speak with the least) to the *Fortieth* Part of them; and, as for that small inconsiderable pittance he has *attempted* to reply to, it has been shewn you by detail, with what incredible Weakness or worse, he has perform'd it. I intreat you also to reflect that the passages he has left *unanswer'd*, are not *Trivial* or *Sleight* ones; but *all* of them, *Pertinent*; *almost all* of them, *Substantial*; and, by far the *greater part*, of *vast* Import; as coming up close to our *main Point*, the *Absolute Certainty of Christian*

bian Faith, (that is, as to its having been taught by Christ,) by our respective Principles. So that, in case They, and the Reasons for them, be left standing in their full force, as they yet stand, his whole Cause is utterly lost; and himself convinc'd not only to be no *Good Defender* of Christian Faith, but withall no *Steady Holder* that his Faith is truly Christian, or derived from Christ; Or, if he holds it to be such *at all*, it must be by *Enthusiasm*, or *Fanatick Inspiration*, not upon truly *Rational* or (which is the same) *Conclusive* Grounds. He will say perhaps he has *touch't* upon *some* of those Particulars; nay, now and then, made long Discourses against *diverse* of my Positions. But, all this he might have done tho' he had had never an Adversary. To ~~answer~~ *answer* is to ~~solve~~ *solve* the *Arguments* of another, not to find fault with his *Conclusions* and make Discourses on his own head; a Method which any Judicious Reader may observe runs thorough his whole Book. Whence I am not ty'd to *Reply* to such *Impertinent* and *Irregular Prevarications*; but only to *defend* and stand by my *Reasons*; and 'tis a Courteous Condescendence, not a Right due to his Carriage, that I have reply'd to them at all; since my Arguments, according to the Laws of Disputation, must be granted to *stand firm* 'till they be *overthrown*. Yet, notwithstanding I was not oblig'd to humour his Illogical Proceedings, I do not know of any thing that is *Pertinent* and of Moment that I have over-pass'd; and I could have spoke it with more assuredness, had he quoted the Pages in my Letters all along as I did in him, especially when I cited him; but he would not expose himself to that disadvantage, lest the Reader should by that means be directed still to my Discourses themselves; and comparing them with what he had said to them, see how *Frigid*, *Indirect*. or utterly Insignificant his pretended Answers were. Tho' I say I know of no *such* passage omitted, but what

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has been already reply'd to and fore stall'd in my former *Letters*, or in *Errour* *Donplus*, yet, in case he still contends I have, let him single out those which he judges the strongest, or any page in this Answer of his own which concerns the Certainty of Faith as we treat of it, that is of *Christ's Doctrin as 'tis Knowable by us at this distance from his time*, and I do promise him a very punctual Reply to each particular Passage, one by one. He would much oblige our Readers and mee too, if instead of *Answering* he will needs fall to *Arguing*, he would please to pick out what's most Pertinent and Weighty, and let each single Point be debated *apart*. This would give a far Clearer Light to our Readers: And for their sakes, if he will not do this himself, I shall (as my leisure serves) do it for him. In the mean time I am to demand of him publickly as my Right, both a *punctual Reply* to the long Roll of these his important *Omissions*, and also a Defence of his *Trifling Performances*: And, in case he *denies* to give me and the World that Satisfaction, since none who knows him can think *he* wants *Wit* and *Parts* to do it, if feasible, it must necessarily be concluded his *Cause* wants *Truth*.

Your Well wishing Friend and Servant in Christ,

J.S.

F I N I S.